

1 February 2009
 ANF/ OBAMA ERA
 (and: \Proposal\Aims of Book)

(From files: Nixon, Nucs & Me; Woolf-Nuclear Security. Thoughts that bear immediately on possible actions by the antinuclear movement, Congress, or the Obama administration, during the new era.)

Obama era:

The National Security Archive should move immediately to exploit Obama's commitment on his first day in office to open up government, freeing up the FOAI process, giving benefit of the doubt to disclosure. They should move to get expeditiously all the past and pending requests that have been stalled, along with appeals on redactions. Specifically, *they should move to get action on their past request for NSSM-3 (now thirty years old!)* Nuclear Glasnost as the new theme! What I hoped to get from Gorbachev. (Now the US seems the only NWS that might actually disclose past planning for Armageddon: **if** Obama is serious about moving toward nuclear abolition. Time at last to execute **Operation Candor**, after 55 years!

("Dr. Strangelove" might actually be re-released! A good idea when I do make my revelations. See the DVD, on which, I believe, I'm interviewed.)

(From: notes on Amy Woolf, Nuclear Policy, CRS)

[NEED both for an Obama ground-up reconsideration of nuclear policy, AND a Congressional review of it, for the first time. IDEALLY: US/Obama glasnost (consult Gorbachev!) on nuclear weapons. OPERATION CANDOR at last!

Revealing war plans. Challenging Russia AND OTHER STATES to do the same!

Exposing estimates of casualties: realistically, including not only fallout but fire, and nuclear winter.

Congress to get targets and options at last (see Kerrey attempts).

And while we're at it: Congressional hearings on COG, martial law, suspension of the Constitution.

Congress to get all the information it has sought for eight years: attendees and proceedings of the Energy Task Force; OLC rulings; NSA targeting; memos on the legality of torture, etc. (not just FOIA, but answers to earlier demands, subpoenas)

Congress to get witnesses it has sought, or subpoenaed, from Bush Admin!

Examine: How—little—Congress has attended to nuclear weapons policy over the last sixty years! What closed hearings? (Published?) What open hearings? What efforts—rebuffed? (see Sen. Kerrey)

(Note my effort to get Zablocki to reopen a hearing, on delegation.)

4. Note the total lack of adequate justification (no matter how generously assessed) for retaining our current level of forces, or alert posture, into the post-SU period (since 1989, twenty years ago): either for damage-limiting or deterring surprise attack or backing up FU threats.

5. Vs. the attitude, “we want to look forward, not back.” Quite apart from assessing and dealing with past criminality (which **always** consists of “looking back”: to eschew the latter is to abandon efforts to apply the rule of law!): there is the question of whether to extend, modify or abandon current policies or attitudes inherited from the previous administration (including the mind-set of personnel actually carried over).

It’s obvious in this case that BHO should not give the “benefit of the doubt” to judgments of this predecessor’s administration! Virtually every decision, rule, policy should be open to skeptical examination! (Actually, Bush did exactly that on succeeding the Clinton administration: “If he did it, we don’t”: see the policy on negotiations with North Korea. That was disastrous. But to apply that principle to **this** predecessor is only prudence, common sense.

And that applies to nuclear policies, **even where** Bush II was only following in the path of Clinton (whose nuclear policies were not, in some cases, as sound as Bush I’s). “If (Clinton’s policy: e.g. of counter-proliferation, by preemption) was good enough for Bush II, it needs to be looked at again, very critically.”

Thus, Obama and Congress should both look again, very critically, at the history of help and coverup with respect to Pakistan’s nuclear policy;

And Turkey! **See Sibel Edmonds’ charges!** (Hearings at last?!

And for that matter, Iraq (under Hussein: what Clinton chose to cover-up rather than pursue, Iraqgate) and Iran (the Shah), including chemical warfare.

And Israel. (Fat chance).

But there is growing agreement that the role of nuclear weapons must be addressed (not only, number and type of weapons, or new warheads): in order for there to be “political support” (! Or effective resistance) to the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW).

[Aha! Will this—and the replacement of the whole production complex—be the focus, or the basis, for the new discussion? Who will be discussing this within the BHO admin, or Congress, or outside? **Ask Paine; Cirincione; Kimball; Perkovich.**

[get papers from Lifton NY conference (Kuznick, Krieger): comment, as on this.]

[need for a **Roles and Missions** study and debate—and our recommendations—including consideration of the long-run, goal of abolition (BHO), real non-proliferation strategy (relation—oh dear—to global warming, with possible increased reliance on nuclear energy worldwide—Chu—rather than abandonment!)]

For once, at last, this debate/hearings should include knowledge of past and current nuclear planning, targets, objectives, comprehensive effects (including fire—Lynn Eden—nuclear winter, effects on neutrals and allies.

My book, thesis/hypothesis: never did US policy really consider, or even mention, effects of large-scale nuclear war on allies or neutrals! Nor truly seek to minimize civilian casualties, in “enemy” (or “enslaved”) populations. (Or neutrals, allies! Willingness to let these depend on “which way the wind blows.” See herman Kahn calculations of “acceptable” damage, to prevent SU control of West Europe.)

Compare this (oddly, I don’t think I ever have) to USG unwillingness to estimate civilian casualties to be expected in Vietnam; or suffered in Panama, or Gulf War; or now, in Iraq (or earlier, during sanctions). (Of course, it was a surprise to me that the JCS had privately calculated these expected casualties at all, in 1961). Note question: Is this reticence “essential,” because “the US public would not accept” (whatever that might mean) realistic estimates [as Brian Willson hopes, or Noam Chomsky claims to believe]; or is it simply convenient, prudent, politic, because public knowledge of the realities would create something of a public relations problem, controversy, discussion, a complication, which would have to be dealt with, and which would be surmounted. See torture.)

[BHO could easily “reduce the number of deployed forces and limit the role of nuclear weapons” (W: as most studies recommend) without radically or even significantly changing the role or its effects on proliferation and danger.

Everyone—including nuc hawks—recognizes a need to **change the rationale** for nuc weapons—i.e. for maintaining large nuc forces and perhaps new weapons!—since 1991 and 2001. (Making 2001 serve a case for nucs is a challenge, but simply an invigorating one.) Non-prolif by counter-prolif, preemption, regime change of “world’s worst regimes...”; underground sites for development, production, storage.... “Dangerous world.”)

Remaining threats to our “interests” might still justify US military intervention (see the Carter Doctrine, about our vital interests in the Middle East) but could not easily, or let us say, morally, justify expanding the conflict to nuclear attacks. (Carter, in 1980, was still posing the possibility of “external”—Soviet—intervention in the ME; the CW was still

on. Hence his nuclear threats.) By earlier standards—still valid in the eyes of most of the world (which didn't accept the premises of the CW anyway)—such US FU, in a post-CW world, would all the more qualify as “the greatest crime against humanity.” **It could and should be ended by Obama; his statement during the campaign that he would not use nuclear weapons against Pakistan** (for which he was scorned and attacked by Hillary Clinton, his new Secretary of State) **should be made universally applicable.** (Unfortunately, he is unlikely soon to “remove this option from the table” in “negotiating” with Iran—any more than Clinton or the Republicans—although he should.)

Unfortunately, in the US, for many citizens the end of the CW meant a reduction in their inhibitions about US FU threats. There was no longer the risk that US FU almost anywhere would entail a danger of all-out nuclear war and the destruction of the US. So in 1991, a sizeable number of Americans accepted the possible use of US nucs to protect the lives of US soldiers or avoid a stalemate in the Gulf War, as well as to respond to Iraqi CW or BW (a real possibility at that time, possibly deterred by US and especially Israeli nuc FU threats).

With no more threat to Europe as an immovable obstacle to abandoning FU threats, its place was taken by a (Iraqi) threat of CW to US troops, either responding to Iraqi aggression (1990-91) or to US aggression (2003). The latter threat was hardly comparable to the former, or even very militarily significant (given military countermeasures). The easy maintenance of the US FU policy after the end of the CW reflects a considerably eroded aversion to nuclear weapons in the American public over time (in America as in Japan: less “nuclear allergy”) and in particular after the end of fear that FU would trigger the Domsday Machines.

The latter potential does remain, given the unconscionable policy of maintaining the alert forces on both sides. **That should have ended at least eighteen years ago** (along with the Bush-Gorbachev measures of removing nuclear weapons from ships, and taking the airborne command planes off alert). With the end of the CW, it has no strategic rationale whatever or justification, while maintaining a continuous, significant and inexcusable danger. (Obama could and in a sense should end it in a day, though politically he would be ill-advised to do it tomorrow, given generations of brainwashing of the public.)

It is time for Obama to attack the notion of attainable strategic nuclear “superiority”—either for the US or for Russia—as a total myth for at least the last forty years. The case must be made on the basis of Nuclear Glasnost (which will reveal that damage-limiting in a preemptive or escalatory first-strike by the US was not infeasible—whether its pursuit was good or (in reality) bad—for the first generation of the nuclear era, but has been so ever since. (Recent arguments by L—and--- that the deterioration of the Soviet posture has brought a “good” first strike by the US within the realm of feasibility, depend on a very high level of the damage to the US and its allies (do they consider the latter?) and the risk of still greater damage that is “acceptable.”)

Obama could and should immediately reinstate the Clinton commitment to the steps outlined in the 2000 NPT Conference (rescinded, in effect, by Bush) and revitalize the negotiations and unilateral measures to implement them. Several of these should be realizable quickly, brushing aside any Republican objections: ending production of weapons-usable material, a CTB, resuming disarmament negotiations with Russia aiming immediately at lower ceilings. (Radical reductions might have to wait for preparing the domestic ground; likewise, unhappily, NFU—to prepare the ground in the Obama/Clinton administration itself!)

4 February 2009

[Who could defend, and how would they do it, a plan for the possible use of 2200 operationally deployed warheads---or 1000 (the new negotiation target, as of this morning!)—or “more than a few, or even a few dozen nuclear weapons”? Even in the only contingency for which this is planned—seeking “to destroy large numbers of weapons and facilities in Russia, or possibly in China”—*how could any really defend doing that?!*

How could anyone claim that even “dozens” of weapons were necessary for “extended deterrence”? Or defend using numbers like that (or any) to defeat an enemy? As for “dissuading” any rival from challenging the US with nuclear weapons or other “asymmetrical threats”—“convincing them that they can never negate the US nuclear deterrent”...Of course they can’t! How many do you need to do that? (On a submarine, say).

[How Much is Too Much? At every point in time since 1945, we’ve always been above that level!]

Need for a new “Roles and Missions” Study (inside Administration and Congress)

[If BHO redefines the **role** of nuclear weapons—in a way that does not include a **disarming attack against Russia, either preemptively or as an escalation**—then **much** smaller numbers than 1000 become appropriate: as York said, “**closer to one than one hundred.**”!]

York was presumably not figuring in “extended deterrence.” Will we legitimize and invite proliferation by going down to small number? Well, we’ve been legitimizing and inviting it by our past and present policies. This takes a close and comprehensive look, but it seems plausible that we can do a lot more to discourage proliferation than we’ve ever done, by going comprehensively in this direction. (The big worry in the Cold War was a German program; there seems NO motive for that now. Japan? Not if we move appropriately—unlike now!—to keep a lid on China and North Korea. **Who else “needs” that “umbrella” now?** (have I missed someone?)

This might be exactly the time for an overt, bold attack on the concept of continuing the nuclear “umbrella”: extended deterrence.

AND “damage-limiting” against Russia (absurdly infeasible and counter-productive).

AND “first-use” threats!

3/26/09

\ANF\BOOK DRAFT\MY AIM

My aim is to help lower, by a number of means (including this book, with documents) within the next few years, the current probabilities (as I see them)—“as things are now going”—of several contingencies over the next few years to several centuries.

“As things are now going”—the dynamic situation involving the policies of the NWS (nuclear weapons states) and prospects of proliferation, a situation which is mainly determined, almost defined, by the nuclear policies of the US (and secondarily, Russia, which in turn tends to follow the US)—i.e., in the absence of the changes in policy and practices that I hope to help bring about within the next few years--I believe that the probabilities of several types of catastrophe stand as follows:

- 1) A probability—more likely than not—over the next one or two centuries that several hundred million humans, possibly several billion, will be killed, with many more permanently injured, in an all-out thermonuclear war involving a large part of the nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia, destroying most civilization in the Northern Hemisphere;
- 2) A significant possibility that this conflict will cause a global nuclear winter that will lead to the extinction of most complex forms of animal life, the end of civilization worldwide, and the near-extinction of humanity; with a higher probability of a hemispheric or major regional nuclear winter in the Northern Hemisphere;
- 3) Near-certainty (again, as of now) of the nuclear destruction of some cities, by terrorists or in a regional conflict (such as India-Pakistan) this century, perhaps within a decade or two: with the effect, aside from deaths up to tens of millions, of making it very much harder, perhaps nearly impossible, to *lower* any of these likelihoods further within the respective time frames.

I believe it is possible to lower all of these probabilities greatly by specific, concrete measures reflecting a fundamentally changed nuclear policy in the US and subsequently in Russia and the other NWS. I believe it is possible (not, sadly, probable, as of this moment) to bring about this change in US orientation and policy and the accompanying concrete measures, by a variety of political means including major public education on still-hidden nuclear realities. (The recent change in administration was necessary to this process, but very far from sufficient.) Revelations of past US aims, planning and behavior (by me, and hopefully others) may prove to be a critical element in this campaign. That is my hope and the objective of my efforts over the next few years, and for the rest of my life.

There have always been some who have disagreed with me on the likely consequences of one or several nuclear explosions in a “small” war, an accident or unauthorized action, or (more recently) a terrorist attack. Almost fifty years ago, in 1960, Bill Kaufmann told me at RAND, “Dan, there won’t be any change in these policies until another weapon goes off on a city.”

Half a century later, his prediction has not been disproven. The policies have not fundamentally changed, in the absence of a Hiroshima-like event. But then, as I pointed out at the time, Hiroshima itself had not moved the world, still less the US, to act together effectively to ban nuclear weapons nor to eliminate the possibility that more Hiroshimas would occur. I have never believed it likely—let alone, felt confident—that the shocking example of another nuclear disaster would lead to a global mobilization to ensure that the disaster could never be repeated. Rather, I have always foreseen steps by each nation to lower the chance that it would happen, in the near future, to *them*; and I have felt that would mean, for non-nuclear-weapons states, that they would be determined to acquire their own deterrent force. I foresee that perhaps illogical response even if the immediate explosion was by some non-deterrable terrorist group, or by accident; I think it would heighten awareness and apprehension about nuclear uses by adversaries (and potential possessors) in general and encourage threshold proliferators “doing what one could” to deter what could be deterred (while acquiring the ability to make threats themselves). In other words, I see an actual explosion as increasing the likelihood and rate of further proliferation, which would multiply the difficulty of reaching agreements to stop or reverse the spread and to ban the weapons eventually.

Moreover, I think it highly probable that such an explosion, especially in a current democracy, to lead to police controls and surveillance not only in the target country but in others, that would create police states throughout the currently “free world,” bringing about the twilight or the end of democracy very widely. That in turn would, I believe, make the changes in nuclear policies that are needed to lower these probabilities over ensuing decades and even centuries much, much more difficult and unlikely.

Perhaps I am wrong. I expressed these views to two major arms controllers at MIT, George Rathjens and ... Ruina, in the course of my Manhattan Project II in 1994, arguing against their own predictions which were almost exactly like Kaufmann’s over thirty years earlier. Both of them believed that a new explosion in anger would catalyze the concern in the US and the world that would be both sufficient and necessary for the effort to bring about changes and goals that we both desired. To my surprise, neither of them seemed to have considered the counter-predictions that I put forward. They took them seriously when I raised them, with some surprise on their own part, but I’m not aware that I changed their minds.

At that time, the prospect of a terrorist weapon was not yet salient, though it had always been in the air during the nuclear era. Now, it could be only a few years off, or a decade or two. But the other risks, of attacks by a NWS, regionally or even all-out, have not disappeared or come close to it, since the sharp diminution of the latter, worst case probability with the ending of the Cold War.

If I am not wrong, that the occurrence of any of these disasters, from one explosion to many, will virtually end rather than enlarge the possibility of radical reduction or elimination of the danger of further nuclear wars, then we are still in a window when such reduction remains politically possible, but the window is likely to close within a few years, a decade or two at most.

(I know that this sounds like the predictions that Helen Caldicott, M.D. made throughout the Eighties and Nineties, that we had “at most four years” to change course radically and get the dangers under control, before any possibility vanished. I certainly hope, and I still believe, she was wrong, in the certainty of her deadline (though she may not have been; that remains to be seen). I never felt, and I don’t now, that a deadline can be specified with high confidence in terms of a few years, whether regarding possibilities of change or, still less, a certainty of nuclear war. But I do feel, with a sense of urgency comparable to hers (which I don’t think was misplaced in her) and even with comparable confidence that the effects of the next Hiroshima, from any cause, are far more likely to be unfavorable to further progress than favorable.

The disagreement on this point is very similar to that which arose among nuclear scientists in 1945 over the political effects with respect to control of nuclear weapons to be expected from the *first* Hiroshima, or even the first test of an atomic weapon. Szilard and other members of the Franck Committee in Chicago believed that using the weapon on a Japanese city (and perhaps even the Trinity test) would virtually doom any chance of reaching an agreement with the Soviets that would preclude their acquiring their own weapon, launching an arms race. Thus, they cautioned against a combat use, on long-run grounds, even if it would save many American lives otherwise risked in an invasion. (They were not aware of just how unlikely such an invasion looked to the top decision-makers aware of Japanese readiness for a negotiated solution by July 1945, or they would have pressed their point even more strongly).

Conant and Oppenheimer, on the other hand, perhaps along with Stimson, believed (convinced themselves, as Szilard saw it) that use on a city, and *only* such use (compared, say, to a demonstration in a desert or against an isolated military target) would alert the world to the destructive threat of nuclear weapons and make them ready to make the sacrifices of sovereignty necessary for international control and banning.

In the event, of course, Szilard and his colleagues were right. Neither the Soviets nor the US (nor, shortly, Britain or France) were encouraged in the slightest by Hiroshima and Nagasaki to forego further development of nuclear weapons or submit to effective international control: quite the contrary.

I personally don’t expect the occurrence of the next Hiroshima to have a different result. I believe that what I (and very many others) hope to see *must* be achieved *before* and in the absence of any such new catastrophe.

And I see as an absolutely essential first step in that process, the cessation and explicit renunciation by American presidents, campaigners, officials and Congresspersons of

recurrent *threats*, preparations and readiness to inflict a new Hiroshima ourselves, in the first such use of nuclear weapons since Nagasaki.

Wednesday, June 10, 2009
8:37 AM

\\ANF\Proposal 09\Frontline.3

What I knew in the Sixties, and what is almost surely true today:

What Frontline should expose, via its own investigation and by stimulating Congressional hearings:

--Strategic nuclear US options were/are operationally at the ready to destroy hundreds of cities simultaneously, killing hundreds of millions, or billions, of people by blast, fire and radioactive fallout.

(I was instrumental in revealing this to President Kennedy, in the course of my revising radically the Eisenhower-era top guidance to the operational nuclear war plans for Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Nevertheless, such options have always remained current in operational plans.)

Past Congressional inquiries on projected targeting and effects have been thwarted. Frontline should bring to the attention of the public and Congress our possible complicity in multi-genocide (on the order of hundreds of Holocausts) and (see below) in risking human extinction.

--The clouds of soot and smoke from the simultaneous burning of hundreds of cities, if this option were executed, would block sunlight for a prolonged period in the northern hemisphere, and possibly around the globe, causing "nuclear winter." Recent scientific studies have confirmed that an attack in spring or summer would freeze lakes and rivers and destroy all crops, bringing mass starvation and the destruction of civilization in the northern hemisphere and possibly worldwide, and possible near- or total human extinction.

The Obama administration is reportedly aiming at reducing the number of deployed, operational US and Russian warheads to 1500 (from 1700 to 2200) each and possibly down to 1000 each. But 1000 warheads are still capable of causing nuclear winter, the worldwide destruction of civilization and possibly of humanity. There should not exist on earth one, let alone two, "nuclear winter machines." This points to the urgent necessity of reducing, in the short run, operational nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia to well below one thousand total for both.

Moreover, recent scientific studies conclude that even a very much smaller nuclear exchange involving as few as one hundred Hiroshima-sized explosions—such as could occur between India and Pakistan—could have prolonged effects on the ozone layer that protects the earth from ultraviolet radiation, with devastating effects on health and crops, as well as climatic effects greater than any in recorded history. This implies that even the smallest nuclear arsenals—at the level of fifty rather than a thousand-- are larger than can

be justified to the world at large in terms of their possible or likely effects on the world community.

--There were, and almost surely are, a great many American fingers on a number of nuclear buttons distributed around the world in American nuclear commands. The well-known image of the presidential “football”—the briefcase that always accompanies the president containing codes for executing various nuclear options—is meant to convey that only the president can launch nuclear attacks. That is a hoax.

Every president since Eisenhower has delegated authority to launch nuclear operations to nuclear-capable theater commanders under certain conditions, such as inability to communicate with Washington during a crisis or presidential incapacitation (like Eisenhower’s heart attack and stroke). (I revealed this to McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy’s Assistant for National Security, in the first month of his administration; only recently have documents confirming this for Eisenhower and Kennedy been declassified, and the situation, which persists, is still largely unknown to the public.)

It is essential, of course, that it be known to the Russians and others that they cannot paralyze American nuclear retaliation by a single warhead on Washington. (For the same reason, the Russians have made similar arrangements: as have, almost certainly, the Pakistanis and every other nuclear weapons state). But this delegation has been, until very recently, one of our most sensitively protected secrets from the American people, lest they be, for good reason, concerned that nuclear war might occur by the authorized but mistaken decision of one or another of many officials below the level of the president. This justified concern would be an addition to the real and also under-investigated dangers (another of my past professional subjects) of false alarms, accidents and unauthorized actions.

Past Congressional hearings have been misled by official testimony on existence of delegation. Frontline should seek current answers, both by exploring possible sources and by stimulating new Congressional demands for truthful testimony on how many fingers are on buttons, whose they are, and what can be known about the probable situation in other nuclear weapons states, in particular Russia, Pakistan, India, North Korea and Israel.

--It is a widespread misconception that no nuclear weapons have been used since Nagasaki. US presidents have used them dozens of times, in confrontations—in the exact same sense that a gun is being used when it is pointed at someone’s head, whether or not the trigger is pulled. It is a myth that the use of nuclear weapons in circumstances other than nuclear attack on the US or its forces has been “unthinkable” in the Oval Office.

On the contrary, every president since Truman has had occasion, usually in secret from the American public, sometimes but not always bluffing, to threaten or to entertain consideration of possible imminent initiation of nuclear attack in a confrontation. That

continues into the present, with not only the president but every major presidential candidate last year emphasizing that “all options are on the table” with respect to Iran (in context with leaks that Vice President Cheney had directed the readiness of nuclear operations against Iranian underground sites and other targets).

This largely-unknown long pattern of consideration and use has everything to do with why each president has maintained vast, ready and widely deployed nuclear forces, how it is that each of them has in effect provoked and promoted nuclear proliferation, and with how close the world has actually come on several past occasions to nuclear war. The real risks of the nuclear era, including current and future ones, can only be understood in light of this secret history.

My own official, classified studies of nuclear crises and threats, including the Cuban Missile Crisis (in which I participated, and which came literally within an arms-length of erupting into all-out nuclear war and nuclear winter), made me almost uniquely aware of this pattern. (Nixon’s justified fear that I knew and might reveal his own nuclear threats against North Vietnam led to his creation of the “plumbers” unit in the White House to silence me, which led to his downfall.)

--As I became aware in the Pentagon in the Sixties, unequivocal USG opposition to nuclear proliferation has always been another myth. There has always been, secretly, split opinion on this within the government, with the highest-level view generally prevailing that proliferation to selected friendly states should be secretly accepted or even supported. This has affected proliferation in Israel, India, and Pakistan (even though some other programs, such as Taiwan and South Korea, have been discouraged).

Along with the past and continuing US first-use threats, this selective toleration or encouragement of proliferation has promoted still further proliferation, as in North Korea, earlier in Iraq, and possibly Iran now. More than that, it makes an effective US or worldwide non-proliferation policy virtually unattainable.

This can’t be changed unless and until the US effectively abandons its own reliance on first-use threats, along with the force readiness to carry them out (dismantling its thousands of tactical nuclear weapons) and leads—instead of resisting, as it has until now—a worldwide movement to delegitimize and eliminate threats of first-use of nuclear weapons.

Frontline should expose, for the first time on television, both this hidden US reliance on first-use threats and its bearing on risks of nuclear war, on proliferation, and on the vastly excessive overall US nuclear forces (which are largely structured to back up the credibility of US first-use threats).

In all these matters, I am prepared to contribute by revealing previously-undisclosed details and documents from my official, classified studies.

Tuesday, January 3, 2012

Barbara, Jan. 2, 2012: What do you want to achieve with your book?

Bottom line, minimum, seems, in some sense, achievable:

The **dismantling of the two Doomsday Machines**, so that it becomes impossible—short of a reconstruction, that would take months or preferably years—to set off the destruction of “all complex life”¹ on earth, inexorably, within minutes or hours.

I would seek to convey that:

--such Machines now exist;

--they came into being incrementally, reciprocally (though with different motives on each side), as a result of sequential decisions, with **no one** on either side **ever** desiring, or projecting or foreseeing such a Machine as a desirable, likely or even possible result of their decisions or of national policy of either side;

--it must be acknowledged that members of a powerful institution—the U.S. Air Force—did emerge from their own city-busting experience in World War II with the belief that the national interest (and the interest of the Air Force, and its industrial suppliers) both legitimated and required the acquisition of a capability to destroy entirely the society (and most of the population) of another country, the Soviet Union;

--it was recognized by scientists and national leaders from the very beginning of the nuclear era that a two-sided nuclear war might “destroy civilization,” not only in the two adversaries but worldwide; no one saw this as desirable or an aim, but neither did the US leadership take significant steps to make it impossible, or even unlikely as a result of a nuclear war;

--Herman Kahn did conceptualize the notion of a “Doomsday Machine” in 1959 that would go beyond this destruction of organized society (either in the Soviet Union—which **was** a wartime objective and predictable capability of the Air Force and Navy throughout this era—or more generally) to the destruction of “life on earth” (down to, say, viruses and bacteria and some insects and grasses); but he projected this only to point to its undesirability. It had no proponents (except, he noted with some unease, among some engineers to whom he described it as a potential deterrent device).

--the science that points to the Doomsday potential of the **then- and still- existing** strategic nuclear operational systems did not emerge until 1983, some twenty years after Kahn’s writing, almost forty years into the nuclear era. However, it has been known for

¹ How can one characterize, concisely, the range of animal and vegetable life that would be threatened by nuclear winter? (And conversely, the range that would not).

almost thirty years now (subject to challenge for over a decade, but increasingly confirmed over the last decade), with little effect on policy;

--The systems on both sides—especially the Russian, after the demise of the Soviet Union and the defunding of maintenance of its warning systems—have always been and still are subject to possible triggering by false alarms in their warning system, or by miscalculation of inevitability of escalation from a regional conflict, or by unauthorized actions by subordinates.

This has long been recognized (and near-explosions actually experienced) on both sides, despite considerable measures to reduce the likelihood, while more reliable measures to eliminate these possibilities have been rejected. Obviously, such an “inadvertent” war (even if it did not result in Doomsday, which it might) is desired by no one; but the characteristics that keep it possible **are** seen as desirable and necessary by influential decision-makers. (My book would seek to subject such priorities to public debate, challenge and change).

--I will seek to explain the motives and perspectives that **did** lead ordinary, conscientious humans to create these all-life-threatening systems, and to maintain them up until now long after it became knowable (and known to some of them) just how dangerous they could be: without any of them² ever actually desiring that the systems be set in motion with these potential results. Most anti-nuclear efforts so far have been, I believe, uninformed or misinformed about these motives, which has led to ineffectiveness in changing the minds of insiders and their supporters in Congress and the public.

--Again, I know that most previous movements to end and reverse the nuclear arms race and proliferation have been ignorant of the relation of both of these to persistent U.S. government policies and instrumentalities in its foreign relations. (In particular, reliance on “credible” threats of nuclear first-use and possible escalation to first-strike, in maintaining a far-flung US hegemony; also, a long-fantastical aim of “limiting damage” to the US in all-out nuclear war by preemptive, disarming attack).

These are policies that **must** be changed if further proliferation is to be averted and radical reduction in nuclear arms and dangers achieved. Even specialists and determined activists generally share this ignorance and fail to direct any effort to changing these specific policies and objectives. A major aim of mine is to clarify these connections, to change the inadvertently misdirected focus of **anti**-nuclear efforts.

² With a few, genuinely-unrepresentative exceptions: principally Generals Curtis LeMay and Thomas Power, with their shared wartime experience of incinerating Tokyo and doing their best to achieve this in sixty-seven other cities in Japan, prior to the A-bombs.

[The bearing of this account of “inadvertence” is that these decisions that created and **maintained** these systems³ were not made by “mad scientists” in the comic-book image or “monstrous, alien” officials, but by ordinary (“normal” by current standards) officials, civilian and military, much like those who are making comparable decisions today and will in the future, in our countries and others.

This has both promising and unfavorable implications. It suggests, realistically, that the Systems can be dismantled by the same sorts of (“ordinary”) people who created and maintained them. For any one of these decision-makers—considered individually, apart from his or her institutional role and context (which means, in some abstraction from their reality)—it should be no harder to change their minds and inclinations than to do so for a typical reader of this book.

However, that’s not the real problem. Very few individuals within the System will read such a book, or listen attentively to someone who has. And if they did, and tried to act on it, they would very probably be quickly extruded from the System and any influence on it from inside. It’s a System that has great support within the bureaucratic and political framework, in each country.

To achieve dismantlement, that support has to be challenged and eroded. Here, individuals with special background and expertise can make a difference. I will aim in this book, in particular, to change the minds and the efforts of recently-retired and consultant nuclear war specialists who can speak with authority, and through them to pick off a handful of supporters from within the system today, who can speak out as General Lee Butler did for a while immediately on his retirement from heading the Strategic Command. (Just for one, I will try to reenlist Butler himself in this campaign).

The somewhat discouraging side of perceiving “inadvertence” in the construction of the present, super-dangerous reality is that it cannot be reversed “simply” by identifying and replacing errant, aberrant individuals or a uniquely-misguided (or “evil”) party or administration. Ordinary humans not only made these decisions, they have proven over the decades resistant to undoing them or working to reverse course. The point that the result is “irrational,” dangerous, and even “monstrous” has been made before, sometimes by a mass movement (against atmospheric testing, or the Freeze, or in opposition to particular weapons like the MX or Pershing II or ABM) without leading to any fundamental change.

³ Perhaps “system” is a better term than “machine”: a Doomsday System, with both human and mechanical/electronic components. “Machine” may convey a system that operates deterministically on the basis of a single human decision, “pushing a button.” This system, with its unparalleled complexity, myriad human components and never-wholly-tested operations—along with unpredictable variations in the environment and poorly-understood, never-before-experienced coupling with the environment, is not fully deterministic either in its working or its effect on the environment.

4/28/09 12:19 PM

It truly is very implausible (though true: the truth I am trying to communicate) that:

Strategic bombing has never had any useful effect;

- ✗ Hiroshima had no appreciable effect in shortening WWII;
- ✗ Torture never has been necessary or even effective in averting terrorist attacks on the US; *Now. over norms, globally*
- ✗ Nothing remotely like the US strategic nuclear posture was ever necessary to deter a Soviet surprise attack on the US. *but: deter comes over in Europe?*

A good thing about Tad Daley argument: He acknowledges, explicitly and in detail, that some of the dangers are of low probability: yet unjustifiable, indeed outrageous, inexcusable, horrifying. E.g., LOW/accident/UA "certainly killing hundreds of millions of human beings, and possibly bringing about the extinction of all life on Earth."

Another good thing: He emphasizes that the US does not now (after Cold War threats to Europe) have a need or justification for FS/FU capability, and perhaps not even for nuc deterrence at all; but that other countries **do** have incentives (lacking our conventional superiority against all adversaries, or against us) for both of these, and for delegation, LOW (testing). Their incentives are greatly amplified by our own posture, though not entirely dependent. (And doesn't the possibility of eventual retaliation by a terrorist bomb reduce the credibility of our nuclear umbrella?)

*D.L.
w.R.* | Our land-based missile (and bomber) force is good for one thing (only): a highly coordinated very large escalatory or preemptive attack. (The Trident force could do this, too; the land-based force merely adds to the impact. However, its vulnerability makes it somewhat more credible that it would actually be used, since it "invites" a Russian preemptive attack and therefore is more likely to be used preemptively by us, in a use-it-or-lose mood. It makes Russian escalation of a US FU attack that much more dangerous for the Russians, lest it provoke a US preemptive attack. But just where would we have to fear such Russian escalation? (If NATO used nuclear weapons in a conflict over Georgia, or the Ukraine? Don't go there!)

- ✗ MAD never did reign, for a moment, as a basis for our operational war planning.
- ✗ The SIOP-62 planned attacks on cities (per se; and most planned attacks on "military targets" in or near cities) NEVER made any military\strategic sense at all in a FS, preemptive or escalatory, or even (for all but a tiny fraction of the targets) for deterrence of nuclear attack (a non-problem in 1961 anyway). They were a vestige of the WWII Harris/LeMay firebombing strategy (which had no useful military effect even then).

*How many "mil. targets" really in cities?
What benefit of attacking others?*

3/26/09

\ANF\BOOK DRAFT\MY AIM

My aim is to help lower, by a number of means (including this book, with documents) within the next few years, the current probabilities (as I see them)—“as things are now going”—of several contingencies over the next few years to several centuries.

“As things are now going”—the dynamic situation involving the policies of the NWS (nuclear weapons states) and prospects of proliferation, a situation which is mainly determined, almost defined, by the nuclear policies of the US (and secondarily, Russia, which in turn tends to follow the US)—i.e., in the absence of the changes in policy and practices that I hope to help bring about within the next few years—I believe that the probabilities of several types of catastrophe stand as follows:

- 1) A probability—more likely than not—over the next one or two centuries that several hundred million humans, possibly several billion, will be killed, with many more permanently injured, in an all-out thermonuclear war involving a large part of the nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia, destroying most civilization in the Northern Hemisphere;
- 2) A significant possibility that this conflict will cause a global nuclear winter that will lead to the extinction of most complex forms of animal life, the end of civilization worldwide, and the near-extinction of humanity; with a higher probability of a hemispheric or major regional nuclear winter in the Northern Hemisphere;
- 3) Near-certainty (again, as of now) of the nuclear destruction of some cities, by terrorists or in a regional conflict (such as India-Pakistan) this century, perhaps within a decade or two: with the effect, aside from deaths up to tens of millions, of making it very much harder, perhaps nearly impossible, to *lower* any of these likelihoods further within the respective time frames.

I believe it is possible to lower all of these probabilities greatly by specific, concrete measures reflecting a fundamentally changed nuclear policy in the US and subsequently in Russia and the other NWS. I believe it is possible (not, sadly, probable, as of this moment) to bring about this change in US orientation and policy and the accompanying concrete measures, by a variety of political means including major public education on still-hidden nuclear realities. (The recent change in administration was necessary to this process, but very far from sufficient.) Revelations of past US aims, planning and behavior (by me, and hopefully others) may prove to be a critical element in this campaign. That is my hope and the objective of my efforts over the next few years, and for the rest of my life.

Non-Failures, Catastrophes Avoided
It “really could” have been worse

- We're still here: no all-out nuclear war, no nuclear winter.
- No nuclear attacks, Sept. 1945-August 2011 (66 years).
- “Only” nine nuclear weapons states (plus several “virtual”), 2011.
- No accidental or unauthorized nuclear explosions.
- No preemptive attacks reflecting false alarms.
- No war with China, or with Chinese troops since Korea.
- No war with SU, never with Soviet troops.
- Non-nuclear wars remained limited, non-nuclear: Korea, Indochina, Suez, Lebanon, Quemoy, Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan (Pakistan)
- Cuban Missile Crisis did not explode.
- No attack on Iran (yet).
- No invasion of Cuba.
- ABM programs were limited, no massive build-up.

So: Is the conclusion sound that nuclear attacks—either limited or all-out—are really impossible, the system is very stable against these, despite rhetoric and preparations? (And the Cold War and nuclear weapons kept the world safe?)

(“Dr. Strangelove and the Horrible Epoch,”: Schelling)

No. Note the contrary indications with respect to each of the “successes” (yes, real successes) above: the close calls, near-escapes, false alarms, threats, instabilities, covert strategy and aims, the rejection of stabilizing measures or meaningful arms reductions...) (cf. decades before WWI).

10/29/08

/nuc memoir/dreamthoughts/what I fear

What I learned from the JCS calculations on the effects of the SIOP was that for—relatively speaking, given the potential destruction—trivial advantages, humans working for the JCS, and (despite some reservations and fleeting anguish) two presidents were prepared to endorse full preparations for burning to death and otherwise murdering half a billion other humans.

Moreover, again for trivial (not desperate) motives, they could live with a system that had a significant chance of causing these effects “by accident,” by false alarm or unauthorized, low-level action. Moreover, they had committed themselves to setting this process in motion deliberately, by presidential decision and organized, highest-level implementation, in a wide variety of circumstances. All of this had been prepared in secret, from the US public (and to a lesser extent, from the Soviet adversary, even when the supposed intent of the preparations was deterrent! E.g., delegations of authority, whose most justifiable motive would be to deter decapitating attacks by the Soviets: rather than simply to ensure mutual assured destruction in the event of such an attack.) And the secrets had been, and remain, very well kept, by thousands of agents.

Since all this was done by Americans—not by a Nazi regime that could be regarded as humanly aberrant, unique—it seems a reasonable predictor of what was possible, or to be expected, from successive American and Soviet regimes and, as well, from other nations that could acquire comparable civilization-destroying systems: like France, China, Japan, all of which have been on the cusp of this for a generation, perhaps awaiting only a renewal of testing. (Such capabilities have been widely available, given testing, since the development of MIRVs, forty years ago).

One of the motives for developing such doomsday capabilities (aside from profit-making, in the US, or bureaucratic empire-building in the SU) has been to make threats of more limited FU (first-use of nuclear weapons) credible, by providing a basis for some confidence in the US that FU will not be reciprocated or escalated by the SU, or, contrarily for the SU, some basis for confidence that the SU **could** reciprocate to US FU without evoking US escalation or FS (first-strike), or might even preempt with an SU FS.

The SU set off on this massive construction precisely after it had been taught in the Cuban Missile Crisis that the US FS capability forced it to accept second-tier status strategically: the US could claim and back up a right to a monopoly of nuclear weapons (and a threat of invasion of neighbors like Cuba) in its “near abroad” which the SU could not enforce in Turkey (or Berlin). It proceeded to imitate the US strategic posture, after a failed attempt to reproduce on the borders of the US the US tactical posture in NATO, on the border of the SU.

All of this was a potential model for an Indian-Pakistan nuclear arms race, and instability. And as well, for a reliance on India/Pakistan reliance on FU threats. Or, Israel/Iran. Or Japan/China. (Or the two Koreas, if North Korea lasts that long?)

What has **not** been the case is what many have wrongly supposed to have been the reality: that the prospective destruction, in particular mutual destruction, to be expected in a nuclear war has banished the very notion of initiating nuclear attacks from the minds of non-insane human leaders and other officials and has precluded serious (and especially, accident-prone) preparations for such attacks and even reliance on serious, not-total-bluff threats.

What is quite mistaken is a widely-held belief that since the end of WWII there has **never** been serious discussion or even consideration among the leaders of a single nuclear weapons state of possible **imminent** initiation of attacks by themselves or even by their opponents; if tacit or explicit threats were made, they were entirely bluffs, with no readiness or probability of being carried out whatever, and perceived as such by adversaries, so that in no case did they affect events or achieve any perceived benefit.

This mistaken view is, after all, not only plausible but almost compelling on the basis of a widely-held (mistaken) understanding of almost-universal human values and rational behavior. A single exception—at least, involving a “normal” regime like an American administration, not a Nazi-like regime (such as caricatured Soviet regimes were sometimes imagined to be) would be very challenging to this view of “human nature” and its official expression.

The reality is that there have been—unknown to almost any fraction of the public and even to journalists and scholars--several dozen exceptions, mainly in the US but not limited to America. The world, but in particular the US, is ignorant both of the doomsday characteristics of the overall nuclear posture of the superpowers (in concrete terms, though “the masses” have an apocalyptic sense of the looming potential that has actually been closer to reality than that “nuanced” view of elites) and of the many times that world leaders, especially US, have seriously discussed possible short-run implementation of nuclear attacks that, in addition to causing immense regional destruction, could detonate the doomsday exchange.

Knowing both of these aspects of reality, I see the lack of nuclear attacks over the last sixty years as due in large part to “the triumph of pure, dumb luck” (as Acheson described the outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis, far more truly than he knew), a kind of secular miracle, providing little or no basis for confidence that it would be reproduced (even for the US) over the next sixty years, or much less. Yes, the overall balance, and its instability, has no doubt operated in specific cases, and overall, to inhibit readiness to carry out nuclear threats. But it has spectacularly failed to prevent such threats from being made or to prevent serious, dangerous preparations for carrying them out ; and the lack of execution in any one case, or any of them, seems on close examination to have depended time after time on decisions or circumstances that could well have gone otherwise.

The state of mind of leaders, and the authorized operations of bureaucracies subordinate to them, with respect to the role of nuclear weapons in foreign policy and

crises have been entirely, regularly, systematically and spectacularly different from what has been supposed by the public and even by elite scholars and opinion-makers (with supposedly privileged access).

After all, one could easily imagine—indeed, the overwhelming majority of the American public and even students of policy probably believe it to be true—that American leaders since 1945 have given no thought whatever to the possibility or the possible desirability of launching nuclear first-use or first-strike either in a surprise attack or in a crisis (absent a compelling expectation of an enemy first-strike). The other side of the same coin is that many can imagine “the military” generating such “contingency plans,” in the course of their supposed inclination to prepare for a vast range of implausible, hypothetical circumstances, such as an order to invade Canada or defend from Martians. But this, it’s supposed, would be without the encouragement or even knowledge of their civilian superiors.

And when Dulles, for example (or Truman, with respect to Iran), claimed to have made threats or proposed to rely on threats of FU, that was widely ridiculed as hot air, referring to threats that were either never uttered at all or were regarded, properly, by their recipients as total bluffs, to be disregarded.

I think it is very unlikely, almost impossible, that one who has read the secret, inside discussions of these matters, as I have, will find their seriousness and significance to be so dismissable, or to find the discussions anything but astonishing (on first discovery) and alarming.

Here is what I have been led to: the conclusion that the human systems, the nation-states, that have shown the cognitive, physical, organizational capability to develop these society-destroying machines, do not come close to demonstrating a reliable ability to prevent them from being “used,” set in motion to catastrophic and ultimately civilization-destroying effect. On the contrary: though no social process or outcome is certain, especially within a given time period, the odds are extremely high that nuclear catastrophes will occur, even, eventually to the extent of exterminating most living species and most (if not, perhaps, all) cities and humans.

The Ogburn notion (to which I was introduced in 1944, specifically with reference to atomic weapons) of “cultural lag” implies that the human, societal and organization ability to control and constrain technologies of destruction **can** be expected to evolve eventually, albeit with a “lag,” in a way commensurate with the advance in technology. But that may be misleadingly optimistic. The development of ever more terrible weapons, each in turn looked to as making war impossible but making it more certainly and obviously horrific, has not in the slightest reduced the frequency or even scale of wars. With no foreseeable progress in ending wars, there is no firm basis for predicting that this “lag” will ever be closed. This is not merely to say that, although social control of military destructiveness does improve (like technology), it doesn’t do so enough, or fast enough. On the contrary, it’s not clear that societal control has improved

at all. It's not clear there is a real "race" going on, even though deterrence does operate to some extent.

To be sure, the fact that there has not been a Third World War, yet, over the last sixty years, or even (more significantly, to be sure) the launching of atomic or thermonuclear weapons (despite military failures by their possessors), can reasonably be cited as providing evidence that at last "the weapons to end major wars" have emerged, or to put it another way, that humanity has proven, after all, to be up to the challenge of **precluding** the use of these weapons. That is precisely what a great many analysts have concluded. (The mass of the public, as shown in opinion polls, has not; and I think they are right). The question is whether that evidence is adequate, or compelling. I believe not. I believe that to think otherwise requires ignorance—which is, in fact, almost universal—of the secret, insider data on nuclear planning, preparations and threats to which I have been exposed since 1958.

I propose to share with the public, and with scholar-analysts in particular, as much as possible of these data that have affected my own thinking (as I did with the Pentagon Papers that had shaped my own thinking on Vietnam), in hopes that this will lead to a reconsideration of (what I see as) the extreme dangers and urgency of our present situation—in the face of possible nuclear catastrophes, as with global climate change—and a readiness to consider and implement radical, comprehensive and urgent changes in policy to reduce these dangers.

There is, thanks in part to Gore and to many scientists, a widespread understanding of the urgency and the scale of the challenge posed by global climate change due to human policies and activities. At the same time, it is evident to many that human society, organized as it is and exhibiting long-term characteristics and limitations that it does, may not actually meet this challenge: may not, in a real sense, be "capable" of doing so.

The same applies to nuclear wars (and terrorism). That was seen, widely, at the very onset of the nuclear era. But the subsequent failure, so far, of "nuclear hurricanes" to eventuate has greatly dampened general concern about the dangers, in a species strongly oriented to focus on the recent past and the immediate future. **Can** we, better than the owner and top officers on the Titanic, react to the danger of capsizing before it's too late to avoid collision with the iceberg ahead? Maybe yes, maybe no. There is no way to know for sure. What I propose to do is to act as if we might have that capability.

Secrecy about the frequency of "near-misses" (as with, near melt-downs in nuclear energy reactors prior to Three-Mile Island and Chernobyl) **and about official decisions that increase, rather than reduce or preclude, the possibility and likelihood of catastrophe** has contributed crucially to this unfounded complacency and resulting passivity. One thing I can do—and perhaps provide an example and stimulus to others who could do it better than I—is to remove that cloak of secrecy.

10/29/08

/nuc memoir/dreamthoughts/what I fear

What I learned from the JCS calculations on the effects of the SIOP was that for—relatively speaking, given the potential destruction—trivial advantages, humans working for the JCS, and (despite some reservations and fleeting anguish) two presidents were prepared to endorse full preparations for burning to death and otherwise murdering half a billion other humans.

Moreover, again for trivial (not desperate) motives, they could live with a system that had a significant chance of causing these effects “by accident,” by false alarm or unauthorized, low-level action. Moreover, they had committed themselves to setting this process in motion deliberately, by presidential decision and organized, highest-level implementation, in a wide variety of circumstances. All of this had been prepared in secret, from the US public (and to a lesser extent, from the Soviet adversary, even when the supposed intent of the preparations was deterrent! E.g., delegations of authority, whose most justifiable motive would be to deter decapitating attacks by the Soviets: rather than simply to ensure mutual assured destruction in the event of such an attack.) And the secrets had been, and remain, very well kept, by thousands of agents.

Since all this was done by Americans—not by a Nazi regime that could be regarded as humanly aberrant, unique—it seems a reasonable predictor of what was possible, or to be expected, from successive American and Soviet regimes and, as well, from other nations that could acquire comparable civilization-destroying systems: like France, China, Japan, all of which have been on the cusp of this for a generation, perhaps awaiting only a renewal of testing. (Such capabilities have been widely available, given testing, since the development of MIRVs, forty years ago).

One of the motives for developing such doomsday capabilities (aside from profit-making, in the US, or bureaucratic empire-building in the SU) has been to make threats of more limited FU (first-use of nuclear weapons) credible, by providing a basis for some confidence in the US that FU will not be reciprocated or escalated by the SU, or, contrarily for the SU, some basis for confidence that the SU **could** reciprocate to US FU without evoking US escalation or FS (first-strike), or might even preempt with an SU FS.

The SU set off on this massive construction precisely after it had been taught in the Cuban Missile Crisis that the US FS capability forced it to accept second-tier status strategically: the US could claim and back up a right to a monopoly of nuclear weapons (and a threat of invasion of neighbors like Cuba) in its “near abroad” which the SU could not enforce in Turkey (or Berlin). It proceeded to imitate the US strategic posture, after a failed attempt to reproduce on the borders of the US the US tactical posture in NATO, on the border of the SU.

All of this was a potential model for an Indian-Pakistan nuclear arms race, and instability. And as well, for a reliance on India/Pakistan reliance on FU threats. Or, Israel/Iran. Or Japan/China. (Or the two Koreas, if North Korea lasts that long?)

What has **not** been the case is what many have wrongly supposed to have been the reality: that the prospective destruction, in particular mutual destruction, to be expected in a nuclear war has banished the very notion of initiating nuclear attacks from the minds of non-insane human leaders and other officials and has precluded serious (and especially, accident-prone) preparations for such attacks and even reliance on serious, not-total-bluff threats.

What is quite mistaken is a widely-held belief that since the end of WWII there has **never** been serious discussion or even consideration among the leaders of a single nuclear weapons state of possible **imminent** initiation of attacks by themselves or even by their opponents; if tacit or explicit threats were made, they were entirely bluffs, with no readiness or probability of being carried out whatever, and perceived as such by adversaries, so that in no case did they affect events or achieve any perceived benefit.

This mistaken view is, after all, not only plausible but almost compelling on the basis of a widely-held (mistaken) understanding of almost-universal human values and rational behavior. A single exception—at least, involving a “normal” regime like an American administration, not a Nazi-like regime (such as caricatured Soviet regimes were sometimes imagined to be) would be very challenging to this view of “human nature” and its official expression.

The reality is that there have been—unknown to almost any fraction of the public and even to journalists and scholars--several dozen exceptions, mainly in the US but not limited to America. The world, but in particular the US, is ignorant both of the doomsday characteristics of the overall nuclear posture of the superpowers (in concrete terms, though “the masses” have an apocalyptic sense of the looming potential that has actually been closer to reality than that “nuanced” view of elites) and of the many times that world leaders, especially US, have seriously discussed possible short-run implementation of nuclear attacks that, in addition to causing immense regional destruction, could detonate the doomsday exchange.

Knowing both of these aspects of reality, I see the lack of nuclear attacks over the last sixty years as due in large part to “the triumph of pure, dumb luck” (as Acheson described the outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis, far more truly than he knew), a kind of secular miracle, providing little or no basis for confidence that it would be reproduced (even for the US) over the next sixty years, or much less. Yes, the overall balance, and its instability, has no doubt operated in specific cases, and overall, to inhibit readiness to carry out nuclear threats. But it has spectacularly failed to prevent such threats from being made or to prevent serious, dangerous preparations for carrying them out ; and the lack of execution in any one case, or any of them, seems on close examination to have depended time after time on decisions or circumstances that could well have gone otherwise.

The state of mind of leaders, and the authorized operations of bureaucracies subordinate to them, with respect to the role of nuclear weapons in foreign policy and

crises have been entirely, regularly, systematically and spectacularly different from what has been supposed by the public and even by elite scholars and opinion-makers (with supposedly privileged access).

After all, one could easily imagine—indeed, the overwhelming majority of the American public and even students of policy probably believe it to be true—that American leaders since 1945 have given no thought whatever to the possibility or the possible desirability of launching nuclear first-use or first-strike either in a surprise attack or in a crisis (absent a compelling expectation of an enemy first-strike). The other side of the same coin is that many can imagine “the military” generating such “contingency plans,” in the course of their supposed inclination to prepare for a vast range of implausible, hypothetical circumstances, such as an order to invade Canada or defend from Martians. But this, it’s supposed, would be without the encouragement or even knowledge of their civilian superiors.

And when Dulles, for example (or Truman, with respect to Iran), claimed to have made threats or proposed to rely on threats of FU, that was widely ridiculed as hot air, referring to threats that were either never uttered at all or were regarded, properly, by their recipients as total bluffs, to be disregarded.

I think it is very unlikely, almost impossible, that one who has read the secret, inside discussions of these matters, as I have, will find their seriousness and significance to be so dismissable, or to find the discussions anything but astonishing (on first discovery) and alarming.

Here is what I have been led to: the conclusion that the human systems, the nation-states, that have shown the cognitive, physical, organizational capability to develop these society-destroying machines, do not come close to demonstrating a reliable ability to prevent them from being “used,” set in motion to catastrophic and ultimately civilization-destroying effect. On the contrary: though no social process or outcome is certain, especially within a given time period, the odds are extremely high that nuclear catastrophes will occur, even, eventually to the extent of exterminating most living species and most (if not, perhaps, all) cities and humans.

The Ogburn notion (to which I was introduced in 1944, specifically with reference to atomic weapons) of “cultural lag” implies that the human, societal and organization ability to control and constrain technologies of destruction **can** be expected to evolve eventually, albeit with a “lag,” in a way commensurate with the advance in technology. But that may be misleadingly optimistic. The development of ever more terrible weapons, each in turn looked to as making war impossible but making it more certainly and obviously horrific, has not in the slightest reduced the frequency or even scale of wars. With no foreseeable progress in ending wars, there is no firm basis for predicting that this “lag” will ever be closed. This is not merely to say that, although social control of military destructiveness does improve (like technology), it doesn’t do so enough, or fast enough. On the contrary, it’s not clear that societal control has improved

at all. It's not clear there is a real "race" going on, even though deterrence does operate to some extent.

To be sure, the fact that there has not been a Third World War, yet, over the last sixty years, or even (more significantly, to be sure) the launching of atomic or thermonuclear weapons (despite military failures by their possessors), can reasonably be cited as providing evidence that at last "the weapons to end major wars" have emerged, or to put it another way, that humanity has proven, after all, to be up to the challenge of **precluding** the use of these weapons. That is precisely what a great many analysts have concluded. (The mass of the public, as shown in opinion polls, has not; and I think they are right). The question is whether that evidence is adequate, or compelling. I believe not. I believe that to think otherwise requires ignorance—which is, in fact, almost universal—of the secret, insider data on nuclear planning, preparations and threats to which I have been exposed since 1958.

I propose to share with the public, and with scholar-analysts in particular, as much as possible of these data that have affected my own thinking (as I did with the Pentagon Papers that had shaped my own thinking on Vietnam), in hopes that this will lead to a reconsideration of (what I see as) the extreme dangers and urgency of our present situation—in the face of possible nuclear catastrophes, as with global climate change—and a readiness to consider and implement radical, comprehensive and urgent changes in policy to reduce these dangers.

There is, thanks in part to Gore and to many scientists, a widespread understanding of the urgency and the scale of the challenge posed by global climate change due to human policies and activities. At the same time, it is evident to many that human society, organized as it is and exhibiting long-term characteristics and limitations that it does, may not actually meet this challenge: may not, in a real sense, be "capable" of doing so.

The same applies to nuclear wars (and terrorism). That was seen, widely, at the very onset of the nuclear era. But the subsequent failure, so far, of "nuclear hurricanes" to eventuate has greatly dampened general concern about the dangers, in a species strongly oriented to focus on the recent past and the immediate future. **Can** we, better than the owner and top officers on the Titanic, react to the danger of capsizing before it's too late to avoid collision with the iceberg ahead? Maybe yes, maybe no. There is no way to know for sure. What I propose to do is to act as if we might have that capability.

Secrecy about the frequency of "near-misses" (as with, near melt-downs in nuclear energy reactors prior to Three-Mile Island and Chernobyl) **and about official decisions that increase, rather than reduce or preclude, the possibility and likelihood of catastrophe** has contributed crucially to this unfounded complacency and resulting passivity. One thing I can do—and perhaps provide an example and stimulus to others who could do it better than I—is to remove that cloak of secrecy.

10/29/08

/nuc memoir/dreamthoughts/what I fear

What I learned from the JCS calculations on the effects of the SIOP was that for—relatively speaking, given the potential destruction—trivial advantages, humans working for the JCS, and (despite some reservations and fleeting anguish) two presidents were prepared to endorse full preparations for burning to death and otherwise murdering half a billion other humans.

Moreover, again for trivial (not desperate) motives, they could live with a system that had a significant chance of causing these effects “by accident,” by false alarm or unauthorized, low-level action. Moreover, they had committed themselves to setting this process in motion deliberately, by presidential decision and organized, highest-level implementation, in a wide variety of circumstances. All of this had been prepared in secret, from the US public (and to a lesser extent, from the Soviet adversary, even when the supposed intent of the preparations was deterrent! E.g., delegations of authority, whose most justifiable motive would be to deter decapitating attacks by the Soviets: rather than simply to ensure mutual assured destruction in the event of such an attack.) And the secrets had been, and remain, very well kept, by thousands of agents.

Since all this was done by Americans—not by a Nazi regime that could be regarded as humanly aberrant, unique—it seems a reasonable predictor of what was possible, or to be expected, from successive American and Soviet regimes and, as well, from other nations that could acquire comparable civilization-destroying systems: like France, China, Japan, all of which have been on the cusp of this for a generation, perhaps awaiting only a renewal of testing. (Such capabilities have been widely available, given testing, since the development of MIRVs, forty years ago).

One of the motives for developing such doomsday capabilities (aside from profit-making, in the US, or bureaucratic empire-building in the SU) has been to make threats of more limited FU (first-use of nuclear weapons) credible, by providing a basis for some confidence in the US that FU will not be reciprocated or escalated by the SU, or, contrarily for the SU, some basis for confidence that the SU **could** reciprocate to US FU without evoking US escalation or FS (first-strike), or might even preempt with an SU FS.

The SU set off on this massive construction precisely after it had been taught in the Cuban Missile Crisis that the US FS capability forced it to accept second-tier status strategically: the US could claim and back up a right to a monopoly of nuclear weapons (and a threat of invasion of neighbors like Cuba) in its “near abroad” which the SU could not enforce in Turkey (or Berlin). It proceeded to imitate the US strategic posture, after a failed attempt to reproduce on the borders of the US the US tactical posture in NATO, on the border of the SU.

All of this was a potential model for an Indian-Pakistan nuclear arms race, and instability. And as well, for a reliance on India/Pakistan reliance on FU threats. Or, Israel/Iran. Or Japan/China. (Or the two Koreas, if North Korea lasts that long?)

What has **not** been the case is what many have wrongly supposed to have been the reality: that the prospective destruction, in particular mutual destruction, to be expected in a nuclear war has banished the very notion of initiating nuclear attacks from the minds of non-insane human leaders and other officials and has precluded serious (and especially, accident-prone) preparations for such attacks and even reliance on serious, not-total-bluff threats.

What is quite mistaken is a widely-held belief that since the end of WWII there has **never** been serious discussion or even consideration among the leaders of a single nuclear weapons state of possible **imminent** initiation of attacks by themselves or even by their opponents; if tacit or explicit threats were made, they were entirely bluffs, with no readiness or probability of being carried out whatever, and perceived as such by adversaries, so that in no case did they affect events or achieve any perceived benefit.

This mistaken view is, after all, not only plausible but almost compelling on the basis of a widely-held (mistaken) understanding of almost-universal human values and rational behavior. A single exception—at least, involving a “normal” regime like an American administration, not a Nazi-like regime (such as caricatured Soviet regimes were sometimes imagined to be) would be very challenging to this view of “human nature” and its official expression.

The reality is that there have been—unknown to almost any fraction of the public and even to journalists and scholars--several dozen exceptions, mainly in the US but not limited to America. The world, but in particular the US, is ignorant both of the doomsday characteristics of the overall nuclear posture of the superpowers (in concrete terms, though “the masses” have an apocalyptic sense of the looming potential that has actually been closer to reality than that “nuanced” view of elites) and of the many times that world leaders, especially US, have seriously discussed possible short-run implementation of nuclear attacks that, in addition to causing immense regional destruction, could detonate the doomsday exchange.

Knowing both of these aspects of reality, I see the lack of nuclear attacks over the last sixty years as due in large part to “the triumph of pure, dumb luck” (as Acheson described the outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis, far more truly than he knew), a kind of secular miracle, providing little or no basis for confidence that it would be reproduced (even for the US) over the next sixty years, or much less. Yes, the overall balance, and its instability, has no doubt operated in specific cases, and overall, to inhibit readiness to carry out nuclear threats. But it has spectacularly failed to prevent such threats from being made or to prevent serious, dangerous preparations for carrying them out ; and the lack of execution in any one case, or any of them, seems on close examination to have depended time after time on decisions or circumstances that could well have gone otherwise.

The state of mind of leaders, and the authorized operations of bureaucracies subordinate to them, with respect to the role of nuclear weapons in foreign policy and

crises have been entirely, regularly, systematically and spectacularly different from what has been supposed by the public and even by elite scholars and opinion-makers (with supposedly privileged access).

After all, one could easily imagine—indeed, the overwhelming majority of the American public and even students of policy probably believe it to be true—that American leaders since 1945 have given no thought whatever to the possibility or the possible desirability of launching nuclear first-use or first-strike either in a surprise attack or in a crisis (absent a compelling expectation of an enemy first-strike). The other side of the same coin is that many can imagine “the military” generating such “contingency plans,” in the course of their supposed inclination to prepare for a vast range of implausible, hypothetical circumstances, such as an order to invade Canada or defend from Martians. But this, it’s supposed, would be without the encouragement or even knowledge of their civilian superiors.

And when Dulles, for example (or Truman, with respect to Iran), claimed to have made threats or proposed to rely on threats of FU, that was widely ridiculed as hot air, referring to threats that were either never uttered at all or were regarded, properly, by their recipients as total bluffs, to be disregarded.

I think it is very unlikely, almost impossible, that one who has read the secret, inside discussions of these matters, as I have, will find their seriousness and significance to be so dismissable, or to find the discussions anything but astonishing (on first discovery) and alarming.

Here is what I have been led to: the conclusion that the human systems, the nation-states, that have shown the cognitive, physical, organizational capability to develop these society-destroying machines, do not come close to demonstrating a reliable ability to prevent them from being “used,” set in motion to catastrophic and ultimately civilization-destroying effect. On the contrary: though no social process or outcome is certain, especially within a given time period, the odds are extremely high that nuclear catastrophes will occur, even, eventually to the extent of exterminating most living species and most (if not, perhaps, all) cities and humans.

The Ogburn notion (to which I was introduced in 1944, specifically with reference to atomic weapons) of “cultural lag” implies that the human, societal and organization ability to control and constrain technologies of destruction **can** be expected to evolve eventually, albeit with a “lag,” in a way commensurate with the advance in technology. But that may be misleadingly optimistic. The development of ever more terrible weapons, each in turn looked to as making war impossible but making it more certainly and obviously horrific, has not in the slightest reduced the frequency or even scale of wars. With no foreseeable progress in ending wars, there is no firm basis for predicting that this “lag” will ever be closed. This is not merely to say that, although social control of military destructiveness does improve (like technology), it doesn’t do so enough, or fast enough. On the contrary, it’s not clear that societal control has improved

at all. It's not clear there is a real "race" going on, even though deterrence does operate to some extent.

To be sure, the fact that there has not been a Third World War, yet, over the last sixty years, or even (more significantly, to be sure) the launching of atomic or thermonuclear weapons (despite military failures by their possessors), can reasonably be cited as providing evidence that at last "the weapons to end major wars" have emerged, or to put it another way, that humanity has proven, after all, to be up to the challenge of **precluding** the use of these weapons. That is precisely what a great many analysts have concluded. (The mass of the public, as shown in opinion polls, has not; and I think they are right). The question is whether that evidence is adequate, or compelling. I believe not. I believe that to think otherwise requires ignorance—which is, in fact, almost universal—of the secret, insider data on nuclear planning, preparations and threats to which I have been exposed since 1958.

I propose to share with the public, and with scholar-analysts in particular, as much as possible of these data that have affected my own thinking (as I did with the Pentagon Papers that had shaped my own thinking on Vietnam), in hopes that this will lead to a reconsideration of (what I see as) the extreme dangers and urgency of our present situation—in the face of possible nuclear catastrophes, as with global climate change—and a readiness to consider and implement radical, comprehensive and urgent changes in policy to reduce these dangers.

There is, thanks in part to Gore and to many scientists, a widespread understanding of the urgency and the scale of the challenge posed by global climate change due to human policies and activities. At the same time, it is evident to many that human society, organized as it is and exhibiting long-term characteristics and limitations that it does, may not actually meet this challenge: may not, in a real sense, be "capable" of doing so.

The same applies to nuclear wars (and terrorism). That was seen, widely, at the very onset of the nuclear era. But the subsequent failure, so far, of "nuclear hurricanes" to eventuate has greatly dampened general concern about the dangers, in a species strongly oriented to focus on the recent past and the immediate future. **Can** we, better than the owner and top officers on the Titanic, react to the danger of capsizing before it's too late to avoid collision with the iceberg ahead? Maybe yes, maybe no. There is no way to know for sure. What I propose to do is to act as if we might have that capability.

Secrecy about the frequency of "near-misses" (as with, near melt-downs in nuclear energy reactors prior to Three-Mile Island and Chernobyl) **and about official decisions that increase, rather than reduce or preclude, the possibility and likelihood of catastrophe** has contributed crucially to this unfounded complacency and resulting passivity. One thing I can do—and perhaps provide an example and stimulus to others who could do it better than I—is to remove that cloak of secrecy.

Wednesday, August 24, 2011
8:54 AM

My challenges

I want to convey effectively several things that are very unfamiliar and inherently implausible.

(1) In the late Fifties, **the US Air Force and Navy constructed a Doomsday Machine.**

No one recognized it as such, literally (though that it is what it was). The concept of nuclear winter was unknown for the next quarter century.

No one was considering or calculating the particular effects of operating the existing strategic forces (as planned, including targeting of cities) that could cause nuclear winter. (Smoke, soot.)

But what was recognized at the highest military and civilian levels is that executing the existing plans with the existing forces would cause hundreds of millions of deaths. (Actually, more than a billion, when other effects—recognized but uncalculated—were taken into account: fire.)

The deliberate destruction of entire national societies, with the annihilation of their population, was intended, and would have been achieved. It was recognized (and accepted, regrettably) that fallout from these attacks would also annihilate an even larger number of people in neighboring and even more distant nations.

(No steps were directed or taken to minimize this undesired but foreseen “collateral damage” (entire nations), by, in particular, minimizing ground bursts. (All USAF attacks were planned for ground burst).)

It was assumed that the Soviets had constructed or were constructing a comparable Machine (for the deliberate destruction of at least one society, the US).

When this turned out not to be true, no measures were even taken to discourage the Soviets from doing so. (There was discussion of a test ban, outside and even inside the administration, but it was successfully opposed by dominant MICC forces for the next 35 years or so, until after the downfall of the SU.)

On the contrary, the Machine (seen not as the Doomsday Machine that it was, but as a—what?—half-hemisphere destroying Machine: that would destroy civilization in the northern hemisphere except for the US)—was used geopolitically, “diplomatically” in such a way (to maintain US hegemony up to the borders of the Soviet Bloc and China)—as strongly to encourage the Soviets to imitate the US in constructing a comparable Doomsday Machine. Which the Soviets did, after replacing Khrushchev (who had

foregone such a construction, and as a result—so his military concluded—had humiliated his nation in the Cuban Missile Crisis).

Since then, there have been two Doomsday Machines, both on hair-trigger alert poised for preemption (on a possible false alarm, or triggered by unauthorized action, including possible catalytic attack). (See the Samson Doctrine of Israel, France, South Africa: or, Khrushchev feared, Germany.)

2. There has always been a significant chance that these Machines would be triggered. There have actually been several cases, at least, where this came close to occurring. There are more ways and possible occasions, realistically, for this to happen than the public or even most government officials realize.

They include false alarms (of a type that have repeatedly actually occurred), accidents (likewise), unauthorized actions (not yet actually experienced, except in imagination: books and films), and—unrecognized either as possibilities or as historical experiences—deliberate execution of plans for carrying out nuclear threats that have failed to induce compliance.

The existence (earlier falsely assumed, but actually existing for the last 45 years) of two Machines makes all of these far more likely than if there were only one.

3. This situation is one that properly evokes horror, fear (preferably not panic, though that would be “natural”), revulsion, incredulity (as to how it could have come about and been maintained: even when the reality of its existence has broken through), blame and condemnation, rage, and hopefully, determination of the highest order and urgency to eliminate it.

Yet these reactions have been suppressed by a practice, when the reality is revealed and discussed at all, of maintaining a quasi-academic tone, an “objective,” dispassionate, non-evaluative discourse, on what the planning and practice has been and the bureaucratic or political reasons for it, without any appropriate evaluation of the nature or consequence of these decisions and actions. That has contributed to the lack of an adequate political response, even when some aspects of past realities are occasionally exposed.

In effect, this type of discussion legitimizes and normalizes the decision-making and implementation that is the subject-matter, stilling any impulse to transform it (at, necessarily, the cost and risks of opposing strongly-supported official policy).

Indeed, any other form of discussion or revelation—of a sort that seems to me humanly appropriate—is likely to be dismissed as “hysterical,” rhetorical, “extremist,” demagogic, emotive, not listened to or absorbed by “responsible” people in whose hands

the maintenance or tolerance of this Machine rests, not leading to effective action to change it.

Moreover, the warnings and demands of “activists” are almost entirely ignored in mainstream media and politics and academic discussion as being non-expert, “agenda-driven,” and “emotional rather than rational,”—hence unreliable as opinion and information and analysis--and (like pacifists) as not being sufficiently aware of or giving appropriate weight to the “complexities,” the competing moral considerations and priorities that must drive reasonable and responsible policy-making.

What is missing—what is foregone—in the typical discussion and analysis of historical or current by **non-activists** is the recognition that what is being discussed is **dizzily insane**: in its almost-incalculable and inconceivable destructiveness and deliberate **murderousness**, its **disproportionality** of risked and planned destructiveness to either the declared or unacknowledged objectives, the **infeasibility** of its secretly-pursued aims (damage-limitation to the US and allies, “victory” in two-sided nuclear war), **criminality** (to a degree that explodes ordinary visions of law, justice, crime), its **lack of wisdom or compassion: its wickedness, sinfulness, evil**.

And yet part of what must be grasped—what makes it both understandable, once grasped, and at the same time mysterious and resistant to our ordinary understanding, almost totally implausible, even unimaginable—is that the creation, maintenance and political threat-use of these monstrous Machines has been directed and accomplished by humans pretty much the way we think of them: more or less ordinary people, neither better nor worse than the rest of us: **not** monsters in any clinical or uncanny sense.

This particular process, and what it has led to and the dangers it poses to all complex life on earth, shows the human species—when organized hierarchically in large, dense populations, i.e. civilization—at its absolute worst. Worse in the potential consequences of normal human traits of leaders and followers than even the most cynical and misanthropic observers of humanity have imagined in earlier periods.

Is it really possible that ordinary people, ordinary leaders, have created and accepted dangers of the sort I am describing? Every “normal” impulse is to say “No!”: “it can’t be that bad!” (“And if it ever was, it can’t have persisted. It can’t be true now, in our own country.”)

We humans have almost universally a false self-image of our species. We think that monstrous, wicked policies must be, can only be conceived and directed and carried out by monsters, wicked or evil people, or highly aberrant, clinically “disturbed” people. People not like “us”: foreigners, criminal types, “them.”

That is mistaken. Although there **are** leaders who appear to be genuine psychopaths and who yet attain power and get obedience, to fatal effects—Hitler, Stalin, Mao in his later stages at least—that is not true of any of the presidents, or the Soviet leaders after Stalin, who have created a continuing nuclear threat to the existence of

humanity. (Or who have foregone effective action with respect to the prospect of climate change).

They have been normal, ordinary politicians (despite propaganda that depicts them, occasionally and temporarily, as extraordinary and heroic, or on the other hand, unusually stupid or conniving). To them and to their subordinates (and enablers in the legislature, courts, media and electorate) Hannah Arendt's controversial proposition, I believe, applies, though it might better have been stated as "**the banality of evil-doing, and of most evil-doers.**"

But there is great resistance to accepting this understanding of the character and motives of people we have elected or those who work for them—and the potential consequences of **their true, ordinary, secret behavior within hierarchical organizations**--even when their policies appear to be and are disastrous. As an explanation of what is going on and how it has come about, it is **denied** by our authorities, our schools, our media. The data that point to it are successfully kept secret, protected from investigation, and denied.

The findings of Milgram (on obedience and contract-keeping), Zimbardo (on hierarchical role-playing), Darley and Latane (on bystander behavior) are not widely familiar and have not been absorbed by many, nor their expression in organizational behavior including our own "national security establishment."

Nor is the actual practice of our armed services widely known, shielded by secrecy and propaganda: strategic bombing in WWII, the actual decision-making on Hiroshima or in Vietnam, actual behavior in Vietnam, actual planning and implementation of our nuclear forces (the subject of this book: which happens to be informed and motivated by my very unusual exposure to each of these subjects).

We've seen, lately, human-caused disasters, preceded by recklessness (generally far greater and more conscious and deliberate than the public can imagine or is allowed to discover): (really, failure to forestall 9-11, obscured by the extreme accusations of "truthers"); the invasion of Iraq and occupation of Afghanistan; failure to prepare for or respond to Katrina; the Gulf oil spill; financial catastrophes affecting millions: savings and loan, housing and electronics bubbles, criminal fraud and the meltdown of the banking and investment system; failure to deal with resulting recession and possible depression.

Perhaps awareness of these will lend some credibility to my basic theme: that the same type of decision-making and behavior has characterized our nuclear planning, threats, gambling, and preparations, risking a catastrophe incomparably greater than all of these together.

How to "get it through" that this has been (and is: see below) the reality, in its full horror and urgency—in a way that may actually mobilize political pressure and action--without shutting off the attention that is sought? I don't want, like other former insiders

or outside “specialists,” simply to say “this is what they did, this is why they thought, or said they thought, they were doing it” without pointing out as I go along: “But their premises were wrong! And even if they hadn’t been, this was crazy, insane! Outrageous, immoral, inexcusable: however necessary it seemed to them--given their secret political and bureaucratic priorities--however true it was that others in their positions would have done much the same at the time.”

And yet: there is the challenge of making such observations as the story goes along—I’m dubious about leaving them to an epilogue at the end, though that would be a way to do it—without seem hysterical and “shrill,” self-righteous and unfairly judgmental (even of my former self, since I don’t mean to spare my own blinkered participation), in a way that puts people off that I want to reach.

It seems essential to me to be willing to address the concrete particularities of the policies and the policy-making and at the same time (unlike “defense intellectuals”—my former identity—or military planners or most officials) to retain a grasp of what might be called moral reality, a human perspective that transcends insiders’ obsession with agency, service, party or national advantage.

4. The Machines continue to exist, still risking doomsday, or lesser annihilation on a horrific and unprecedented scale: still on alert that makes their joint existence unstable, susceptible of being triggered and killing hundreds of millions to billions of humans, perhaps ending complex life on earth.

This is true even though the Cold War that supposedly rationalized their existence and hair-trigger status (and “necessity,” or supposed contribution, to US “security,” or actually, hegemony) has been over for twenty years.

I can’t “prove” this. Yet my confidence that this is the case represents a great deal of evidence, both of historical patterns and trends and of current practices and political obstacles to change.

Given secrecy—not yet penetrated by declassification or memoirs—covering the last thirty to forty years, it is not possible to document the full continuity of these programs and their dangers, up to the present administration. Especially by me, without book-length references to studies that have come out. That would be a different book; it would take much too long, and take up too much space, to be presented in this one.

This will be almost my hardest challenge. I think that by telling the story of my own indoctrination into the Cold War assumptions and their expression in nuclear policy, and the course of my own disillusionment with these, I can actually make unusually plausible the reporting of what I actually saw and came to understand. But there will be a strong tendency of readers to accept this as “history” (as happened with the Pentagon Papers!) which has only limited relevance to what is happening and what must be done today.

It will easier to say plausibly that foolish and reckless choices that were made early in the nuclear era by the US are almost surely being imitated, dangerously, by new nuclear states, with their limited budgets, lack of experience and “irresponsible, benighted” leaders. That does need saying, because it is one more, unfamiliar reason for the urgency of stopping and reversing proliferation.

It is important, too, for the leaders and military of the new nuclear states or prospective, to understand newly that the Cold War buildup they are now emulating was **not** as safe and effective for the superpowers as they have been led to believe, and it is not safe for them now.

But I can’t expect that “responsible” people—still misguided by the media and their authorities—will simply accept that the same situation and risks I describe still obtains in the US under Barack Obama, just because I say so. (It was easier to believe that sort of thing about George W. Bush; and indeed it was true, though it was commonly misperceived as his own radical innovation, where it really represented continuity with the secret past. But “that was then”; “we did get rid of him; with all his faults, Obama must be heading us in a different direction;” “after all, he has set the goal of nuclear abolition.”

Yeah. Like his goal of closing Guantanamo. (Announced on his first day in office, as an explicit token of his drastic break from the immediate past.) (In almost every respect, we have what David Bromwich has called “the Bush-Obama administration.” But that is still the perception of a relatively small minority, rejected by most.)

The truth is (as Patricia points out, defending “the human species” from the charge I am leveling) is that most people really have never been exposed authoritatively to the realities I am describing. (The nuclear war hasn’t happened; the threats haven’t been carried out—unlike Vietnam and Iraq and Afghanistan—the gambles haven’t failed, as in the banks, Katrina, Fukushima).

They haven’t been told. They have been told, on the whole, the opposite, by way of assurances. The international environment has changed so much (the end of the Cold War, the emergence of non-state terrorism) that it is hard to believe that the nuclear policies have not and that the ultimate dangers earlier feared have not come close to being eliminated (though the probability of explosion in any one year is less than before).

I cannot prove the scale of the present dangers, as I personally believe them to be. I think my practical, urgent aim must be to motivate pressure on Congress (and potential whistleblowers, witnesses) and other legislatures to **investigate** the questions and issues I raise, not only in the US but worldwide.

After all, **these legislatures have never done so**, not in this country or any other. They have never demanded nor ever been told the truth of nuclear targeting or realistic

accounts of prospective consequences of nuclear war, whether relatively limited and small or all-out: in fatalities and injuries, societally, politically, environmentally.

My challenge to readers is: Did you know this (about the past) at the time? Did you even imagine it, think about it? Did you ever come to know it, until I told you, now? What does this say about the willingness of your leaders and the media to enlighten you, or about their candor and truthfulness right now?

Is it really so implausible that our current leaders (in the US, but also elsewhere) are no less reckless, irresponsible, ignorant of key realities, unwise in their pursuit of dangerous policies, **as all the past ones were**?

Should we not demand that our investigative bodies—legislatures, journalists—**find out**: what current arrangements and inside estimates of their prospects are, how they differ, if at all, from the past?

Without such investigation—both of the past but especially of the present--my own past experience suggests that my revelation of “history” will not lead to much change, if any. And if investigation does occur, that too may be absorbed and passed over without a mass response, without political or practical effect. But stimulating such investigation may be the most I can do.

I can and will, of course, continue to work with those activists who need no further information, to strive to change nuclear policies. But that hasn’t been a large or powerful enough group to bring about much change, even when it was very much larger and got much more attention than is true today. Truthfully, I don’t see much promise in it, though however small the chance that it may stimulate change the effort is worth making.

I have a chance to try to change the awareness of these dangers by revealing previously-concealed information. And that is what I will do.

12:47 PM; 2741 words.

(Sending to TR 9/9/11 12:38 AM)

Sunday, September 4, 2011

DE NOTES\Explaining Almost Everything

Background forces

From almost the onset of the air age, there has been a powerful synergy—a convergence of interests, plans and efforts (including lobbying of the executive branch and Congress)—between the US Air Force, the aircraft industry, and the commercial airline industry.

Each of these wanted and needed the U.S. government and Congress to fund a large American air force, and in particular, a large and continuously “modernizing” fleet of large, long-range bombers.

Air Force “doctrine” called for the US to have air superiority, “command of the air,” in any future conflict: the ability early in any conflict to operate in any airspace relatively freely, without being jeopardized by fighters, anti-aircraft artillery (or later, missiles), or attacks on its own bases and communications.

This required having the best available aircraft and electronics, superior to that of any adversary, constantly improving.

That called for a large and innovating Research & Development industry. But that would be subsidized by the government at a high level only to support a **large** air force.

Within the U.S. Army Air Corps, strategic bombing forces became dominant from early on in WWII (having been frustrated prior to that in pursuing the hopes of early advocates of “Victory through Air Power,” like Douhet, Billy Mitchell and Alexander Seversky).

That dominant part of the Air Corps wanted large, heavy (bombload), long-range bombers to support their claims of being able to play a crucial, or as they thought wholly decisive role in any future large war.

Promoters of commercial airlines wanted the aircraft industry to produce the same sort of planes for commercial flights. To make the costs acceptable, they needed the aircraft industry to develop large production facilities and long production lines. The commercial industry itself couldn’t induce this; only a government-subsidized program of large bombing planes could do that.

That required an independent Air Force, free of budgetary, strategic and operational control by the Army, which was a competitor for budget funds, especially outside hot war, and which wanted mainly from the U.S. Army Air Corps smaller planes for close air support of ground troops and relatively short-range attacks on enemy logistics.

It also required the Soviet Union as the prospective adversary. Only the SU had enough targets—among plausible postwar enemies, which no longer included Germany or Japan—to make a large fleet of bombers necessary: especially with atomic and then thermonuclear weapons! And only the Soviets could fund a large R&D industry that could give the US aircraft a race, requiring the constant modernization that required a large US R&D industry that was needed both for air superiority against all enemies and for the commercial aircraft industry.

Thus, the US Air Force, the aircraft/aerospace/electronics industry, and commercial airline industry all needed for their health and expansion a postwar Cold War against the Soviet Union.

Once the Air Force did become independent and SAC grew into a large force of heavy bombers, there developed additional constituencies that had a stake in its remaining large: voters (and unions) whose jobs and local economies depended on military aircraft production; Congresspersons who wanted their votes, and contributions from the industry; presidential candidates, likewise.

All of these, in their lobbying and campaign efforts, amounted to special interests with a major influence on “defense” policy, like in their own spheres, the oil and coal lobbies, the gun lobby, the Israel lobby, insurance, pharmaceuticals, bankers, Wall St....

Monday, September 5, 2011
11:32 AM

What I'm addressing here is the question that has troubled me for fifty years: How did the Doomsday Machine come to be built, by American humans, by an American government; and maintained and "modernized" by successive administrations, funded by Congress and taxpayers?

For the last twenty years, an equally vexing question: How has this persisted even after the end of the Cold War and the existence of a highly armed superpower adversary; and after the discovery and confirmation of nuclear winter, revealing the nature of both strategic forces as not merely as multi-genocidal but as potential Doomsday Machines?

These apparently decisive changes in the strategic context virtually coincided in time, yet in the twenty years since the two Machines have been maintained with no significant change, in the absence of any strategic rationale whatsoever.

Since each kept on alert vastly more warheads than were needed to cause nuclear winter, with thousands more in ready reserve, the mutual reductions made so far have in no way changed their status as Doomsday Machines: nor their proneness to detonation by a false alarm, by unauthorized action or accident. How can this be?

What are the forces and perceptions that have led to this? What do they say about our species (and our societies: but surely not only ours)? Can—as a practical, political, psychological matter-- the societies and the species that produced these Machines mobilize the creativity and will and efforts to dismantle them? What are the obstacles to change, what has produced this fifty-year homeostasis of global destructive capacity? Can they be overcome, by "us," in time: before the Machines explode, or the resistance to dismantlement becomes even greater? How? By whom, doing what?

The earliest proponents of strategic bombing (aimed at population and industry in the homeland of the adversary)—Giulio Douhet in particular—emphasized the importance of getting in the first blow. But that was based considerably on an overestimation of the effects of that blow, at that time: the destruction that a given number of bombs would cause to population, the panic and dissolution of society that the destruction would bring about, and the inability of defenses (antiaircraft and fighters) to limit the destruction. All these overestimates contributed to an exaggerated view of the effectiveness of strategic bombing among its advocates, even after first blows had been struck: which did not, after all, prove decisive (witness the London Blitz).

Toward the end of World War II, it looked possible that the verdict on strategic bombing would be that it was a vast waste of resources, compared to its actual effects on shortening the war in Germany. Even in Japan, the death and destruction inflicted by the great fire raid on Tokyo on March 9, 1945—which could hardly have been greater if an atomic bomb had been available then and had been dropped instead—had no perceptible effects on Japanese resistance in Iwo Jima and Okinawa nor did it change the surrender terms we had been monitoring since December. (Neither did the near-destruction of the next sixty-four Japanese cities, though atomic bombs would have raised the scale of devastation of some of them up to the Tokyo level).

An atomic bomb could wreak the destruction that it took three hundred bombers with firebombs and high explosives to inflict. But we had three hundred bombers, and more, and we used them successively on the next sixty-four Japanese cities in population terms, killing some nine hundred thousand Japanese civilians before Hiroshima and Nagasaki. All of these together, we now know, and the last two in addition, failed to change the positions on surrender terms of any of the members of the War Cabinet.

The intervention by the Emperor to break the deadlock—contemplated by him earlier—came only upon the entry of the Soviet Union into the war, on August 8. That event led the Japanese to offer terms to the Americans directly for the first time, after giving up their hopes that the Russians would act favorably as mediators for them to achieve terms which the Americans were, in fact, prepared to grant (maintenance of the Emperor): after they had demonstrated the Bombs. (Virtually all American officials except for Byrnes and Truman had proposed offering these terms before the Bombs were dropped).

Whether or not the Bombs had contributed to the shortening of the war (at all), the impression that they had was indelible, in the minds of the American public, unaware that our high officials had been monitoring Japanese diplomatic cables in their pursuit of surrender terms for months. (Ignorant of this, American troops, like the public, were observing only the Japanese fight to the death on Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and our preparations for invading Japan, not knowing that on the basis of their secret intelligence the top American officials had come to regard that invasion as almost surely unnecessary by May, quite apart from the Bombs.)

Thus the worries of the Air Force about achieving its independent status, pursuing the role of strategic bombing, and attaining a large (“Sixty Group”) air fleet of heavy

bombers—three aims, closely intertwined—were over. Eisenhower had noted earlier that the devastation of Tokyo had achieved nothing, militarily or diplomatically (and had protested the use of the “awful” A-bombs to Stimson and Truman, as unnecessary and wrong). Hap Arnold and LeMay shared his opinion that the Bombs were unnecessary, but that was because they thought that the firebombing was sufficient and would surely produce surrender without invasion by the fall, when they would have completed the destruction of the cities and run out of targets. (Actually, the naval blockade, cutting off oil and other imports, seems to have been the decisive factor in bringing the War Cabinet to proposing surrender, on steadily worsening terms.)

Be that as it may, the conclusion they drew about how to win a war, and the crucial role of strategic bombing by the Air Force in that, was essentially that of Douhet after all, with atomic bombs bringing that doctrine to fruition. The war would be won by destroying cities. The B-29 had been built to do just that, and firebombs had been up to the job, with enough bombers: they would have won the war, LeMay was sure, without the atom bombs, given a few more months.

As General LeMay once said to my RAND colleague Sam Cohen (as Cohen told me): “Sam, war is killing people. When you kill enough people, the other guy quits.”

A problem, though, was to justify a large Air Force when a single B-29 could now do the job of three hundred to a thousand (the last raid of the war, after Nagasaki) a month earlier. Only one prospective opponent had enough cities and dispersed industry and military targets to require a **lot** of long-range bombers armed with atomic bombs.

That country was our wartime ally. (But then, Japan had been our ally in World War I. Ever after the Tokyo earthquake and fire in 1923, General Billy Mitchell had the vision of building an Air Force bomber fleet that could have the same effect, precisely on Tokyo with its “paper houses.” His dream was realized.)

Fortunately for the Air Force, our postwar alliance with the Communist-led Soviet Union was fragile. As early as the summer of 1944, physicist Joseph Rotblat in the Manhattan Project heard at dinner from General Groves, in charge of the project, that the atomic bomb they were working on was primarily to confront the Soviet Union after the war.ⁱ

9/5/11 5:01 PM

(A lot of thoughts from yesterday, leading up to the proposition:

From the point of view of SAC, a *false alarm* leading to a preemptive attack on the Soviet Union would be a *better* basis for executing the SIOP—in terms of its likely outcome—than US preemption based on true tactical warning of an imminent or ongoing Soviet attack.

In fact, of all the circumstances in which general war might come about, a false alarm leading to preemption in a period of relative calm between the two countries would be **best**. It would not only be launched before any Soviet planes had taken off from their bases (or been deployed to forward bases) or missiles fired, but it would find them in a non-alert state, unready to respond to tactical warning of their own.

(We didn't know about the Dead Hand during the Cold War, but if it depended on being switched on during a crisis, then a US attack based on a false alarm in a non-crisis period could decapitate Soviet leadership and command without triggering an automatic response.)

Tuesday, September 6, 2011

This thought—that a false alarm FS (first-strike) wouldn't be the worst thing in the world, in fact, it might be the **best** thing that could happen—the Final Solution to the Communist problem, **as promising as a preventive war** which the civilian leadership forbade to LeMay—may well be related to the institutional and psychological setting in which a Type II error—failure to execute the SIOP when it was “appropriate” (in the eyes of the military)—was treated as much less serious, less reliably to be avoided, than a Type I error: executing the SIOP when it was *not* appropriate (in the eyes of the president, say, when the US was not in fact under attack or about to be attacked.

In effect, a Type I “error” would be a way, perhaps the only way, for CINCSAC to get what amounted to a preventive war (a surprise attack on Soviet forces when they were non-alert, not preparing to attack or be attacked) out of a president. That would almost surely be more promising in results—in limiting Soviet damage to the US and in

achieving “victory”—than an attack that was truly preemptive, one launched on tactical warning of a Soviet attack that was actually taking place or about to.

The latter couldn’t hope to stop or destroy most, if any, of the Soviet vehicles that had already taken off, the other bombers would be dispersed to forward operating bases and the remaining missiles and bombers would be preparing to go and could be launched quickly on Soviet tactical warning. Submarines would be at sea, whereas an attack launched on a false alarm (not in a crisis) could find them in port.

A problem with this picture is that a false alarm is unlikely to be credible enough to a president to get him to execute the SIOP when it comes in a period of real calm, lack of conflict or crisis, appearing to signal a Soviet attack “out of the blue.” That possibility (though it preoccupied RAND analysts) was deemed very unlikely, even by the JCS in the JSCP. (Of course, there was the possibility that an attack was occurring, in a non-crisis period, because the *Soviets* were responding to a false alarm, or an unauthorized action.)

Still, evidence of it would be treated skeptically, (so much so as to raise doubts that the system really would respond in time to a real Soviet surprise attack: that was one of the points of the RAND analyses). This situation actually occurred a number of times, on both sides. The warning system did generate false warnings—to some degree, even frequently—and there was enough skepticism to delay a response (by minutes!) with the error being discovered in time, or to avert a response altogether, even though the evidence seemed compelling.

[At some point, discuss the major warning errors, in the US—see the Hart report, and Scott Sagan—and in the SU. In fact, this takes a major account.]

A false alarm is more likely to be responded to (believed enough to warrant preemption) when it does come during a crisis or conflict, when an enemy attack seems more possible than usual. (Thus, Reagan’s rhetoric and buildup made Andropov highly worried about a US surprise attack; he put Soviet intelligence systems on high alert, i.e. looking not only for electronic warning but for evidence of all kinds that an attack might be planned or underway. In that state, a NATO exercise caused great alarm; and false electronic signals at that time would have been taken very seriously. But various such events also occurred during the Cuban Missile Crisis: see Sagan.)

And in that situation, a preemptive attack would be less effective. Though the Soviets might not actually be attacking (i.e., the alarm was false), they might be on unusually high alert. On the other hand, during the Cuban Missile Crisis (a period of very great American superiority, not reproduced later) the Soviets rather conspicuously (under known US surveillance) did **not** go on alert: presumably, precisely because they did not want to generate false evidence to the Americans that they might be preparing to attack.

[Another case: Nixon did go on high alert, deliberately in a way that would be perceived by the Soviets, when he was making nuclear threats against North Vietnam in October

and November, 1969, his “November ultimatum.” Presumably this was to warn the Soviets and North Vietnamese that he was about to carry out his threats, and that he was prepared for, and warning the Soviets against, any Soviet nuclear response, in Southeast Asia or otherwise. The Soviets should not be tempted to attack the US (which they would hardly be inclined to do, in any case), since SAC was on alert; and they should not be tempted to respond at all with nuclear weapons (say, against US bases or a submarine attack on a US carrier), lest they trigger a full attack on the SU, for which SAC was ready. The latter, by 1969, would have been blatantly mad; but then, Nixon was executing his “madman strategy” precisely at that time. (Quote Haldeman)

Of course, a Soviet nuclear response to a US use of tactical nuclear weapons against North Vietnam (for which Nixon had operational plans prepared at the time) was highly unlikely. Both sides knew that, and knew that the other knew it. But the demonstration that Nixon was preparing for all contingencies, even unlikely ones, was meant to lend credibility to his threats, and probably did. Yet they did not succeed.]

LeMay, head of SAC, then Vice Chief and then Chief of Staff of the Air Force (the latter during the Berlin and Cuban Crises, and the early stages of the bombing campaign against North Vietnam) did, by many accounts, believe in the desirability of a preventive war against the Soviet Union, believing he could win it decisively.

But Eisenhower rejected that option for the US in 1953—after asking that it be studied (in the “Solarium” studies)—and the only likely way to get a first-strike executed against the SU—**which was what LeMay and his successor Power designed the Strategic Air Command to do**—was in the form of a preemptive attack—triggered by warning of attack which was either true or (more commonly) false—or else by a Soviet attack somewhere that could either be interpreted, in part, as strategic warning of a Soviet attack arising out of escalation, or as so great a challenge that it “called” for an all-out response. (An example of the latter: Soviet tactical nuclear weapons against a US force invading Cuba: a possibility hours away on Saturday, October 27, 1962, though even LeMay didn’t foresee it.)

The other ways to “achieve” the SAC-desired FS against the SU were a) preemption; b) escalation from a Soviet “provocation” (the USAF favored Ike’s broad concept of “adequate provocation”: any conflict between Soviet forces and American). Since the best form of preemption would be on the basis of a false alarm, the chances of having such a false warning (which in some form or other, was as frequent as streetcars: as McGeorge Bundy said of “Pleikus”) result in a US “preemptive” attack was to delegate the decision to many subordinate commanders, or to automate it (as General Kuter told Herb York he wanted to do).

I am suggesting—the “paranoid,” “conspiratorial” hypothesis-- that the actual delegation that has always existed, and the actual openings that have been allowed to persist for unauthorized action, have been motivated **not** exclusively to assure second-strike retaliation under attack, **but to provide occasion for a first-strike, under circumstances when the president would not choose it** (if he or she were fully aware of

the real situation) but the military would (even if they knew for certain that no Soviet attack were imminent).

This hypothesis is not dictated or proven simply by the fact of delegation and of gaps in the controls against unauthorized action; or even by their persistence after the gaps have been known and pointed out (see Rubel's effort to "correct" the Minuteman launch system, or the years it took to get PALs on strategic weapons) and the delegation has become less necessary as communications improved.

It's based on my fragmentary knowledge of 1) a considerable gap between the minimum level of circumstances that would lead to a military recommendation to execute the SIOP and what it would take to get this decision from a civilian president and his staff; 2) strong evidence that the military are aware of and concerned about this gap, from frustrating experiences in lesser crises. There's little question that (3) the military have shown great resistance to measures that would constrict the military ability to take action independently of civilian authority in a crisis, including action that the civilian authorities might disapprove. This could follow from (1) and (2).

Or, it could simply mean that the military wanted to protect against loss of communications (this is the explicit reason), or, more covertly, against simply incompetent, foolish actions of the civilians, actions that would really defeat the civilians' purposes, actions that should be regarded as "military" choices that were out of bounds of the civilians for bureaucratic, efficiency reasons. See CNO Anderson's determination to get McNamara out of Flag Plot during the Missile Crisis and "let the Navy run the blockade" without civilian interference.

(On the other hand: DID McNamara ever know, during the crisis, that the Navy was actually dropping depth charges on Soviet submarines, to get them to surface? Would he have allowed it? To prevent it might have led to a near-revolt by the Navy (or not): but it would have prevented the Navy from getting within one Soviet vote (of a subordinate on a sub under "attack") of a nuclear attack. McNamara was **right** not to trust Navy judgment in the nuclear era, based on the "traditions of John Paul Jones.")

What I found in the Pacific (and SAC) was that the commands acted to minimize Type I error—failing to execute the SIOP when appropriate—at the expense of failing to reduce and tolerating a low but still frighteningly high probability of Type II error: executing the SIOP when **not** appropriate.

What I have been coming to, above, is the hypothesis or possibility that **increasing** the possibility of Type II error, or at least, failing to lower it, was a positive aim of the military (or parts of it), a desideratum, a goal in itself (even when this did not reduce the possibility of Type I error). Why? Because a Type II error was **desirable**, the only way to get a civilian authority to authorize a first strike in the absence of a genuine Soviet attack, and **better** in consequences than either waiting for a Soviet attack or responding to a genuine one.

If this were the military perception, to get change in the system, reducing the possibility of a Type II error of attacking when a fully-informed president would not want to, it would not be enough for a civilian consultant (or anyone else) simply to point out this possibility to the top military. I am coming to suspect that they might already know of this possibility and deliberately want it to persist. Of course, the system they had/have might allow the possibility of an “erroneous” execution when even **they**, the top military, not only the civilian president, might think it inappropriate. But they might want to accept this risk to avert a situation where the president could reliably prevent an execute order when they did want it to be implemented.

Whether this is the explanation or not: God knows they did resist such changes, having allowed them to persist for years, and allowing them to persist for decades later. (This applies as well to the Air Force’s insane determination to pursue city-busting, under whatever guise.)

A hypothetical instance of this would be: preferring a communications system subject to outages, complemented by delegation, to a communication system with no or fewer outages, especially one with no delegation.

I can’t say anyone really resisted improving the reliability of communications. But on the other hand, delegation certainly has persisted long after the institution of reliable communications: which could be just bureaucratic inertia, but I suspect strongly reflects the considerations above.

And see the recommendations not only of Goldwater but of the Twining Committee that delegation of tactical weapons—“small, conventional nuclear weapons”—be unconditional for theater commanders such as SACEUR.

The gap described above between the president’s criteria for executing the SIOP and the military’s (not to speak of, the public’s!) is related to a gap between the level of casualties the president and his advisors are prepared to “accept” in the event of an escalatory or preemptive first strike, and what the military—and “military intellectuals,” “civilian militarists”—are prepared to accept.\

See the difference between McGeorge Bundy’s (and Herb York’s, a “defense intellectual” but not a militarist) description of the requirements of deterrence (one to ten to a hundred warheads, and “closer to one than a hundred”), and those of the military (or RAND, or HK, or even AJW, speaking of the Soviets at least).

And there is a related gap in “critical risk” (my concept in my lectures on the Art of Coercion): “how sure” each has to be of an enemy attack before an all-out or nuclear response seems warranted. (LeMay would not need to be sure at all: he had a critical risk of zero. Eisenhower ruled out LeMay’s preventive war, a US attack when not in

armed conflict with the SU. Still, an attack on the US was not required for him, as I believe it would be for most others. Any conventional attack, elsewhere, that involved US troops, was enough.)

Preventive War and Preemption

Given the Air Force doctrine of the importance of getting in the first blow, their orientation toward a first strike and LeMay's desire to enact that, why was a preventive war rejected, especially during the period when the US had a literal or relative monopoly of nuclear weapons?

NOT REALLY BECAUSE:

“We’re too nice”

“It’s not the American way” (though that was stated)

We were deterred by the prospect of

any mass killing of civilians

killing *too many* Russians

killing by fallout too many others: allies, neutrals

Rather, during the period of US monopoly of nuclear weapons, or (in the early Fifties) near-monopoly of strategic capabilities, **we were deterred from preventive war by the likelihood that it would not prevent Soviet occupation of Europe** with their superior conventional forces, as a response to our first-strike.

The Soviet forces were to be deterred from conventional aggression by a combination of a US first strike and their being blocked by European conventional forces. When the Lisbon goals for the latter proved politically unattainable, the Soviet forces were planned to be blocked by US tactical nuclear weapons (whose use would be guaranteed by the presence of US conventional forces), even though this would be at the sacrifice of Europe to nuclear war. (The Europeans don’t seem to have grasped this nature of the threat, entirely, but they counted on deterrence.)

Since the early Fifties, the deterrent to a preventive war for civilian leadership has been the uncertainty that a US first-strike would succeed in totally disarming the SU of its

nuclear weapons. Unlike LeMay, or the JCS as late as 1961 (Berlin), civilian presidents from Eisenhower on have found a significant likelihood of suffering **ten million dead** in the US or well less than that from Soviet nuclear retaliation a sufficient deterrent, for them, to a US preventive war: a US first-strike **not** in the context of ongoing armed conflict with Soviet troops or strong fear of an imminent SU first-strike against the US.

Ever since the early Fifties, the Air Force has faced the challenge of maintaining belief in the efficacy and possible necessity of conducting nuclear strategic bombing against an opponent that has nuclear weapons with which to retaliate. Striking the first blow, a first strike, becomes even more important than before, indeed **necessary** to “winning” and avoiding “unacceptable” damage to the US and its allies: but it is not **sufficient** to guaranteeing these ends. With a sizable SU offensive force, even 90% success in disarming it is not good enough to prevent devastation of the US. And 99% success can’t be achieved with a first strike unless:

1) Soviet forces are totally non-alert and “soft” (and the US achieves total surprise, with no Soviet launch-on-warning); no Soviet subs are at sea or escape detection by our hunter-killer subs;

and 2) decapitation works (no Soviet delegation or automatic Dead Hand; and hunter-killer aircraft-missile-reconnaissance teams can find and eliminate nearly all Soviet missiles that survive initial US volleys);

and 3) a relatively low (compared to pre-attack Soviet capabilities) but historically unprecedented level of damage to the US—ten million dead or more—is “acceptable”;

and 4) Damage to Europe in the scores or hundreds of millions of dead “don’t count.”

(3) and (4) above would require that the alternative to a US first strike would have to pose a probable outcome that would look **even worse** than suffering ten million dead in the US, multiples of that in Europe, and causing even more than that, much more, from fallout in neighboring regions. (This apart from causing up to a hundred million deaths in the Soviet Union).

There actually is one situation in which a “rational” US president could be convinced, on the basis of realistic data and warning, that he or she should “accept” these consequences: what appears to be totally reliable indication that the Soviet Union has irrevocably committed its forces to commencing an all-out attack on the US, and the alternative to strictly “preempting” or conducting “second-strike damage limitation” is the probable deaths of a hundred million Americans or more.

(**Even** in this situation, the feasibility of significant damage limitation, on this order, has been almost non-existent since the mid-Sixties (though it did exist before that, “except for Europe”). (1) and (2) have not applied, thus (3) is irrelevant, out of the question. In

other words, there remains no rational incentive to preempt, although our force structure, planning and posture are totally oriented around this goal.)

Thus, even prior to 1964, it would have been **insane** for a US president to launch a first strike in any circumstances other than strict and unequivocal preemption. That applies to the best-conceived and almost-perfectly-executed first strike or preemption, including a coercive strategy.

But try to imagine circumstances on earth in which the execution of **SIOP-62** (even ignoring its then-unknown likelihood of causing nuclear winter) with its predicted massacre of over six hundred million humans, would have been rational or other than insane, even as a truly preemptive strike. There are none. That definitely includes what Eisenhower and the Joint Chiefs regarded as its most likely and compelling justification, a full-scale Soviet invasion of Europe.

It was regarded by President Eisenhower, when he was briefed on it in 1960, as “frightening, appalling”: yet he endorsed it as the operational plan for general war—which he foresaw being executed in a wide range of circumstances—passed it on to his successor without apology, and congratulated its designers on their “good work.” So did each of the four-star Joint Chiefs of Staff (except, creditably, for the Commandant of the Marine Corps, holder of the Medal of Honor for his command on the beach at Tarawa, David Shoup. QUOTE from Rubel.)

It is hard to imagine or explain how anyone at all (including the president and the Chiefs) could perceive the SIOP-62 planning on which they were briefed as anything but insane, murderous without precedent, criminal, evil, sinful, depraved, psychotic. (What epithet, anathematization would be “too much” or even adequate?)

Since 1962, SIOP planning has included more “options” and “flexibility.” Yet since about 1964 a president would be **insane** to launch a first strike of any design under any circumstances whatever, including preemption. That has not meant, however, that US-initiated general war, or even a deliberate presidential decision to execute the continually-updated operational plans for a first strike, has ever been impossible or even highly unlikely in all reasonably likely circumstances. Is this a paradox? I think it should be accepted as a pair of unarguably valid propositions.

To speak bluntly, it would have been insane, criminal, unprecedently immoral, evil, recklessly dangerous (at best), for any of them to have taken such a decision under any circumstances they faced or might have faced; and none of them were clinical psychopaths or criminally insane. Yet circumstances were close or might well have arisen in which more than one of them might have done that. I shall be trying in this book to make that statement plausible, and to explain it.

All presidents have certainly threatened, directed preparations for, and led allies to believe that they would launch a US first strike in response to Soviet conventional aggression in Europe and that they might do so in a number of other contingencies (aside

from preemption). How likely they have been to fulfill such threats or expectations is hard to determine, and has probably varied over different presidents and circumstances. I do not believe they have all been bluffs, or would certainly not lead to US FU or FS even when the president did not initially intend that.

None of this is to say that any of these presidents regarded even the “best” outcome of a preventive war as “acceptable” or **desired** an American first strike. A small number of military officers, particularly in the USAF (notably LeMay) have felt frustrated by this civilian judgment, but their disagreement has not led to open insubordination or to explicit recommendations to abandon this policy and undertake preventive war.

I have suggested that this attitude may, however, be reflected in **the advice they have given and the preparations they have made for US intervention in situations where FU—with a risk of escalation to FS—might become the only alternative to a humiliating defeat.** Many officers who may not strictly have desired a nuclear war, limited or general, have nevertheless been notably willing to **risk** it: more than their civilian leaders, who in turn have been far more willing, secretly, to take this risk than most Americans or other humans.

(Korea, Laos, the Offshore Islands, Berlin, defense of Europe, Iran if necessary, Vietnam, Cuba II; and the sixty-year pursuit of the nuclear arms race.)

The domestic and international politics of the Cold War made political leaders receptive to this military advice for unpromising interventions. But I am suggesting that some of the military pressed this advice—risking nuclear escalation in situations that were fundamentally unfavorable in conventional military terms—because they saw that escalation less negatively, more appropriately risked, than many others did, including their own civilian leadership and still more most Americans.

(The very existence of this military advice—generally kept secret, but susceptible to being leaked—along with the dubious military assurance that it could achieve victory, put great pressure to intervene even on presidents like JFK and LBJ who were privately determined not to follow the advice to the point where they felt it would risk nuclear war. This could mean, from the point of view of the military, presidential choice of a “no-win” policy: as in Laos, Vietnam, Cuba I and Cuba II).

This same attitude, of ambivalence or relative acceptance of nuclear war, was reflected also in recommendations given for US escalations during those conflicts (Vietnam in particular).

And (as I have argued at length above) it may have been reflected in promoting a nuclear posture that maintains and sometimes increases strategic instability: incentives to preempt on both sides, and possibilities for false alarms and unauthorized actions.

Since the end of the Cold War twenty years ago, there has been no strategic rationale for the **threat** of a US first strike, yet the readiness, capability and threat has been maintained

and brought up to date in planning, declaratory policy (more explicit under George W. Bush than ever before, and in no way moderated under Obama) and accurate weaponry, despite its effect of blocking major reductions in nuclear weapons and precluding an effective non-proliferation policy.

To make that threat credible, it has been necessary for at least half a century either to **look** or to **be** insane. The United States has always met that requirement.

Post Cold War situation:

Since the ending of the Cold War in 1989 and of the Soviet Union in 1992, the two Doomsday Machines have remained essentially intact, with fewer warheads operational or on alert but each with far more than enough to cause nuclear winter, ending most life on earth, each subject to possible triggering by false alarm, unauthorized action, or possibly accident, or a presidential or delegated decision to escalate from a limited nuclear exchange.

However, the strategic rationale for maintaining an American damage-limiting, counterforce, disarming first-strike force **in order to shore up the credibility of American FU threats against allies of the Soviet Union –what Joseph Gerson has called “the Deadly Connection” between US regional FU threats and US FS capabilities and threats—has disappeared** along with the Soviet Union and with the failure of Russia to extend a “nuclear umbrella,” Russian Type II deterrence, over any other states.

An exception to this would be if the Ukraine and/or Georgia entered NATO and received the NATO assurance of FU against hypothetical Russian aggression against either of those neighbors. As in the earlier case of NATO vs. the Warsaw Pact, the NATO guarantee would require FU threats against overwhelming Russian forces, and those could be credible only if backed up by a threatened US FS capability against Russia.

That would seem to be reason enough to refrain from accepting Ukraine or Georgia into NATO, but there are strong proponents of this in both parties in Congress, as well as from arms sellers and those who want to see US FS forces maintained. (I presume, that USAF is among these, but I don’t know specifically. And civilian militarists, all the usual suspects.)

Given the infeasibility of significantly damage-limiting preemption, and the lack of necessity to back up FU threats against non-existent states under a Russian nuclear umbrella, **there is no longer any strategic rationale at all for a purported US first strike capability against Russia**, which is no longer an adversary at all in the Cold War mold. There are a variety of urgent strategic reasons for abandoning this capability in terms of force structure, planning, deployment, posture, declaratory policy.

One concrete, variously rewarding expression of these would be the **prompt dismantling of our entire land-based ICBM force.** (Except for doctrinal and political inertia, and a variety of narrow, short-sighted special interests, this should have been done more than forty years ago.)

If along with that we greatly reduced the number (and preferably, also yield and accuracy) of operational Trident II warheads that now constitute a disarming threat to Russian land-based ICBMs, **the incentive to preempt on any sort of warning would be essentially eliminated for either side.** Strategic stability would at last have been thoroughly achieved. The possibility of a false alarm or unauthorized action leading to a general exchange would have been eliminated.

Moreover, the reduced numbers of remaining warheads on both sides would be close to precluding the possibility of producing nuclear winter under any circumstances.

Both sides should promptly reduce joint holdings of warheads to preclude nuclear winter by either side or both sides together: that is a minimum, urgent obligation to all nations including their own, and to life on earth. That should have been done when nuclear winter was first established as a possibility, at least twenty years ago, especially after it was confirmed within the last ten years.

Fast, dramatic reductions and restructuring along these lines—in the interest of sanity—along with a no-first-use policy further exemplified by the elimination and dismantling of all US and Russian tactical nuclear weapons, would be essential to an impressive and effective non-proliferation policy.

They would also be a credible basis for good faith negotiations toward a Nuclear Weapons Convention abolishing and outlawing the national possession of nuclear weapons and weapons-grade nuclear material.

Actually, these particular concrete measures are not familiar, individually or as a group, as prescriptions in most recent well-intentioned and well-informed studies of “next steps in arms control or toward abolition.” The latter don’t, as I see it, seem to take adequate account of nuclear winter or the loss of “the deadly connection” as a rationale for first-strike forces, or the long-term but little-recognized infeasibility of damage-limitation.

All these must come to be recognized, I think, and appropriate conclusions drawn—by the DOD, the administration, Congress—if we are to bring US and Russian operational arsenals down to levels that preclude nuclear winter. Or if we are to eliminate the persistence of crisis instability. Or to move in any significant way toward the abolition of nuclear weapons.

For political reasons, it is extremely unlikely that any of these steps will be taken, under this administration or the next several.

What is not unlikely, I think, is that the desirability, even necessity, of all of these measures could come to be recognized by nearly all of the “arms control and disarmament community.” That would be a policy consensus going very considerably beyond most of them have been actively promoting up until now.

Would that be worth diddly squat? The broad consensus in this out-of-office community on other useful measures has not meant more than that (except for a moratorium on testing, and restraint on ABM deployment) in the past generation. If anything, the sense of priority and urgency and even awareness about these matters is even less (especially compared to other rivals for attention) than earlier.

Still, that’s what I can contribute to, aiming beyond that: to the dismantlement of the Doomsday Machines, the abolition of nuclear weapons and the delegitimation and effective abolishment of war as a human institution.

END NOTES

i [Aside: Minutes after writing the paragraph above beginning, “A problem, though...,” just now, I happened to see a message from Peter Kuznick (I’m not supposed to be looking at e-mail during my writing mornings), informing me that the Fat Man that destroyed Hiroshima was named after Sidney Greenstreet in the *Maltese Falcon*. I replied, “interesting but what’s the basis for this?” Then I noticed that he had a link, to a memoir by Robert Serber: *Peace & war: reminiscences of a life on the frontiers of science* (Columbia University Press, 1998).

Amazon had a search box for it, and I typed in Fat Man, and got the reference that Serber had given it this name. Then I continued to look at the excerpts following (as I shouldn’t be doing), enough to be horrified—despite all I know about this stuff—by the description of the team’s workaday moods and leisure activities on Tinian and how “great” it was that the drops were a “success”—and then, I came across this paragraph:

Serber letter, August 26, 1945, from Tinian (Parts in brackets and italics are added by Serber in the memoir, p. 116-117)

“Life here has reached the beachcombing level. Nothing to do but eat, sleep, and swim. We all survive pretty well on such an existence.

There’s a prize story about Spaatz’s last visit [“General Carl Spaatz was the general commanding all strategy bombing in the Pacific”]. Baker was showing him some of the works. Spaatz questioned something Baker told him, Baker repeated his explanation, Spaatz said, “You may believe that, but I know what I believe,” turned on his heel, and marched out in military manner. [*A little later I was talking to one of Spaatz’s staff officers and he said, “You know, the General is very unhappy about this development.” I was quite surprised, I thought it would be the opposite. “No,” he said “the General says, ‘Now we’ll only need two or three planes.’” (My bold]*

A little more from Serber: Aug. 7 (Tinian: a day ahead of Washington): The next morning we got the news the mission was a success. Of course, we were overjoyed. We were radioed back the readings from the pressure apparatus that had been dropped with the bomb. Bill Penney and I were sitting in one of the Quonset huts, calculating how big the explosion had been, and we almost had the answer, just on the verge of getting it, when, on the Armed Services Radio, we heard President Truman announce that it had been 20,000 tons—a slight exaggeration but not misleading.

“Aug. 7

Dear Baby: Well we seem to have gotten a pretty good press, despite your misgivings. Here everything went like clockwork—no headaches and just as expected. The place is

all steamed up as you can well imagine. Our boys (not the civilians, but the army) have been taking a lot of kidding from other units, so they are on top of the world right now. Yesterday afternoon the Group had a beer & hot-dog party on the ball field, with a short and good speech from the CO. We had a few days with not too much to do, and managed to go swimming every afternoon (here there are no restrictions on using government cars for anything you please). Then it got hectic again, and we've been rushing round pretty madly, but still get in at least dip in the ocean.

The ocean continues to be marvelous, the sunsets gorgeous, the food OK, and life very exciting.

I hope we may do some good in the direction of shortening the war. I haven't had time to pay much attention to the radio today. What was the reaction like?"

(p. 111-112) "Three days later came the Nagasaki drop. Phil Morrison, Luis Alvarez, and I wrote a letter addressed to Sagane, a Japanese physicist whom we had known in Berkeley. We taped the letter to the pressure cylinder that was to be dropped. A remarkable thing about the Japanese is that, after the letter was recovered and turned over to Japanese Naval Intelligence, since it was addressed to Sagane it was delivered to him. He eventually got it back to Luis Alvarez."

"Headquarters
Atomic bomb command
August 9, 1945

To: Prof. R. Sagane

From: Three of your former scientific colleagues during your stay in the United States.

We are sending this as a personal message to urge that you use your influence as a reputable nuclear physicist, to convince the Japanese General Staff of the terrible consequences which will be suffered by your people if you continue in this war.

You have known for several years that an atomic bomb could be built if a nation were willing to pay the enormous cost of preparing the necessary material. Now that you have seen that we have constructed the production plants, there can be no doubt in your mind that all the output of these factories, working 24 hours a day, will be exploded on your homeland.

Within the space of three weeks, we have proof-fired one bomb in the American desert, exploded one in Hiroshima, and fired the third this morning.

We implore you to confirm these facts to your leaders, and to do your utmost to stop the destruction and waste of life which can only result in the total annihilation of all your cities if continued. **As scientists, we deplore the use to which a beautiful**

discovery has been put, but we can assure you that unless Japan surrenders at once, this rain of atomic bombs will increase manifold in fury.” (Emphasis added)

August 31: Phil [Morrison] brought a copy of Time back from Guam the other day. The boys were all delighted to see radar pushed into the back pages. [*The story of how scientists had played a heroic role in the war effort thanks to the development of radar had been all over the newspapers. Nothing, of course, had been printed about us.*]

1/30/13 Why have our plans not been recognized to be insane?

Reagan –Gorbachev at Reykjavik, Oct. 1986: “A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”

First time this was stated by leaders of either nation. These two actually believed it! But US plans had never reflected either of these beliefs, in the slightest—to the contrary. And since Brezhnev, 1964 (22 years earlier) Soviet plans and preparations—and possibly some of the military’s attitudes, though not the leadership (unknown to us, or at least, denied by Pipes, Gray, etc., Team B, Nitze, CBD: wrongly)—had aped those of the US.

So, did this proclamation result, as it “logically should” have, in massive revisions in US and SU plans, deployments, arsenals, threats? Not in the slightest. (see US FU threats in the Middle East, Carter and Reagan, G.H.W. Bush (Iraq), Clinton (Perry v. Libya, v. North Korea). On the other hand, it did correspond to the Reagan-Gorbachev extreme proposals at Reykjavik—ONLY to those, in the history of arms control negotiations or the NPT!—even, hypothetically, to Reagan’s SDI obsession.

The US aides in particular (though no doubt some Russians, if the proposals had gone further) still believed in: a) limiting damage to the US, in a nuclear war (Andy Marshall, USAF); b) “prevailing.”

What does “prevail” mean? One SecDef (?): it means nothing, it’s just something to say. But in general, it’s a euphemism for “winning,” where the latter looks unrealistically ambitious. To USAF and other hawks (Sen. Russell) it meant “coming out ahead,” ending a war comparatively “stronger” than the opponent, dominant, greater in power and influence...

But this is no more possible, between the US and SU (**at least, after 1964**) than “winning.” Nor is “damage-limiting,” averting the destruction of the society and nation (if not, the whole population). (This could have been assured, “MAD,” by the Soviets with very much less investment than they actually made, 1964-89, 25 years. And been more stable, less prone to “accidental” preemptions.

Unfortunately, they drew the lesson from C-II that they needed and deserved “parity” with the US, meaning a force equivalent in size and detail to the US: which was irrationally excessive and dangerous wrt to the Soviets already in 1962 (given SU threat to Europe) and more so as the SU force grew.

Consideration should have been given in late 1961 to reshaping and downsizing it radically, by no later than 1962 or 1963. (Could this have been started in time to avert the Cuban Missile Crisis? Probably not (without giving up our contingency plans for invading Cuba, and the IRBMs in Turkey: not too late in 1961!).

But the Gilpatric threats could have been eschewed, and the Athens and Ann Arbor (which were really aimed—hopelessly—at France more than at the SU!). But that would mean making a real effort to avert an arms race (which in reality, had not really begun as a two-sided race until 1963-64) (in 1967-69, we could have averted MIRVs, which made our land-based missiles vulnerable and increased the chance of “accidental war.”)

To the USAF (Power) and Russell, “prevailing” meant “two Americans left, one Russian.” Or, “two nuclear weapons left in US hands, one in Russian.” Moronic.

Long before 1986—perhaps 25 years earlier—both leaderships should have recognized, “In a nuclear war between the US and SU, neither side can win or “prevail,” limit damage to its society, or survive as a nation, nor will any of its allies, or neighboring neutrals.” Therefore, “it should neither be fought nor should its initiation be prepared for, threatened, made credible and legitimate, nor risked. “

(Actually: nor will most of the human species survive it, or other complex species. That was not known by either in 1961-1981, but it *was* known, to the Soviets and Gorbachev if not to the Pentagon, by 1983 or even somewhat earlier). Reykjavik could very appropriately have been the time for both countries to respond to the discovery of nuclear winter, as their leaders’ proposals amounted to.

(But Reagan foolishly believed he could deliver on a promise, and had to appear to try, to protect the US from any explosions at all through SDI, especially given US-SU disarmament. And Gorbachev feared, not foolishly at all but perhaps not entirely wisely (me, too), that SDI would simply, at great expense to both, destabilize the system—improve unreliable US hopes for its FS capability, and strengthen SU fears of it-- and not result in major disarmament.

[A small-scale deployment of nuclear weapons **could** be worthwhile by an individual country, in deterring both nuclear attack and non-nuclear attack against its own territory. Not only France, Germany, Japan, Israel, Pakistan (why India! Prestige and rivalry with China!)

[What if the Waltz/Rusk (!)/Nixon/HAK (!) had been followed, **instead of** US “extended deterrence,” the US “nuclear umbrella” over its non-nuclear allies: Germany, Japan, Berlin, West Europe (France, UK) (Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium...), Taiwan, South Korea. Give or encourage or permit nucs in: **India; Israel; Japan; Germany, Pakistan (OK, everywhere!)**

Do **not** persist in MIRV, improving accuracy (e.g. in SLBMs, MX, Ss-18, P 2, CMs), decapitating plans and capabilities, ABM: **renounce US (and SU) FU (like China!), hence FS/D-L/CF/decap backup, adopt min det (like China, France, UK)** not only for US and SU but press it on Israel, Pakistan, India (even if they did not “really” give up Type II deterrence for themselves; induce SU to forego any of these FS

capabilities, as we renounced ours, from 1964 on (Gilpatric Committee proposals in 1964-65, pressed on SU instead of the Brezhnev buildup! And been part of the NPT implementation in 1968 (instead of MIRV!) (Obstacles: US bombing of NVN, SU invasion of Czechoslovakia 1968, Nixon FU plans for VN 1969-, What about after VN ends in 1975? (SU support for interventions in Africa? Brzezinski Carter on Afghan, ME? Give-up on START II) Reagan/CPD/Team B (Ford), “parity” with Soviets (! MX, SS-18, Ss-20, P-2, N-bomb...)

The US nuclear “shield” or “nuclear umbrella” of tactical nuclear weapons for **regional defense against nuclear or non-nuclear attack** required a US nuclear “spear” against the patron of its regional opponents, the SU: a disarming spear for preemptive, damage-limiting attack, if its threat was to have the credibility of appearing “rational” rather than mad, suicidal. **[No longer “needed” after ending of Cold War, SU support for regional allies, Warsaw Pact, 1989-91!]**

That was attainable if there were no missile gap as predicted in the Fifties and until (after discovery of no gap) in 1961-63, but was foreseeably and actually unattainable (except in a state of “nuclear denial”, as we claimed and demonstrated by our CF preparations) afterwards. We had again “superiority” (against their land-based ICBMs—as the CPD predicted for the Soviets in the late Seventies, both cases ignoring SLBMs!)-- with MIRV in 1968-70, not later.

QUESTION: How did generations of smart insiders and informed public fail to recognize, year by year, how this posture and plans were insanely murderous and wildly dangerous?

Race with Germans, building Bomb; firebombing raids, overturning laws of war, norms, morality (impelled by technology, alliance politics, demonic enemy, revenge, German precedent (cf. genocide!) (see, torture) (aggression).

Hiroshima motives; end of war; CW, supposed threat to Berlin, West Germany (rearming! See economic motives, rather than SU threat), uprisings in East Europe, SU “defensive” measures to hold on to its Eastern Europe empire; inheritance of colonialist empires: German, French, Dutch, British (Spanish, Portuguese), hegemony in West Europe.

Belief we were racing SU, in offensive capability (bombers, missiles): as false as German case, (or Iraq, Iran), although the SU encouraged this as a bluff. Belief in SU current or imminent superiority, intent to wage or threaten SU FS.

Discovery of SU inferiority (lack of a minimum deterrent against US, only a maximum deterrent against Europe, not a reliable deterrent against US preemptive strike)

After one or two years of recognizing US superiority (1961-62) and lack of prior SU intent on FS (during which, change is put off for economic reasons and for Berlin,

and Cuba-Berlin; and issue of inspections on CTB, on which either side should have conceded), by 1964 people coming into the “strategic analysis community” were confronting a SU that was building the same sort of FS capability that the US had, the kind the US earlier supposed the SU were building earlier and which had rationalized our buildup.

So again (as against the supposed German enemy) we’re facing the supposed problem of deterring an opponent that is seeking or has a FS capability, and a strong second-strike capability. (A min det posture for the US would have been the best response, though it would have given up our FU threats against SU allies or the SU. And it could have averted the SU big buildup—influencing them to be content with strong min det (as McNamara expected them to accept), avoiding nuclear winter or 600M dead, and improved stability.

Our actual response—to work to maintain our “superiority” and avert “parity” (as hawks wanted: or at least to maintain “parity” in FS terms)—did nothing to give us a credible “rational” FS capability (or the Soviets): that became unattainable for either side, from 1964 on. (49 years ago) But we could still act as if we believed that we could reduce damage to our society in a nuclear war: which did lend some credibility to our nuclear umbrella (e.g., FU threats vs. NVN, or in ME) by way of “madman threats.”

At this point, and ever since then until the end of the CW, the US nuclear umbrella depended on the credibility of a mad, suicidal threat: but that was regarded as “better than nothing,” optimal under the circumstances, not as good from the point of view of stability (supposedly arms control aimed at this, but that was a hoax) but still “worthwhile” to support our supposedly necessary extended deterrence—and prevent acquisition of nucs by Germany, Japan, perhaps others.

There’s really nowhere where we or our “interests” need protection from a locally overwhelming non-nuclear attack: i.e., need nuclear FU threats! (except Iran’s underground sites; and protecting Ukraine and Georgia from Russians!) And even if we did, we wouldn’t have to threaten a disarming strike against Russia to deter their extending their nuclear umbrella to allies. (Unless for Georgia and Ukraine, we have no strategic need for FS forces against Russia, or anyone else). Yet, given D.M.s on alert on both sides, omnicide remains a real, non-zero possibility.

(And we’re warned that both Russia and China are building up. With some realism. However, our present FS posture has never been and is not now an appropriate, relatively safe response to that challenge!)

Nuclear Disarmament

Speaker: Daniel Ellsberg [FILE CREATED 5-2-00]

Convenors: John Burroughs and Jim Wurst, Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy

When China tested a nuclear weapon in October 1964, the United States was faced with the question of whether to assist India in conducting its own test. The Chinese test also renewed the more general issue for the United States of how to respond to the spread of nuclear weapons. Should proliferation be "managed", with the attitude that it was inevitable and perhaps even desirable in some cases? Or should the United States support the development of a global regime to contain proliferation, as was already being proposed in international forums?

To address such questions, President Lyndon Johnson appointed a special, very high-level panel, known as the Gilpatric committee, which included such individuals as former Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell L. Gilpatric, former Defense Secretary Robert A. Lovett, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, former Director of Defense Research Herbert F. York, and the like. The January 1965 Committee report stated that it "is unanimous in its view that preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons is clearly in the national interest despite the difficult decisions that will be required" (emphasis added). As Glenn Seaborg, then the chair of the Atomic Energy Commission, explains in his memoirs: "The idea of countenancing Indian or Japanese acquisition of nuclear weapons, which [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk had flirted with, was specifically rejected; the spread could not be stopped there; a chain reaction spreading into Europe could follow".

The report therefore supported an "international agreement on the non-dissemination and non-acquisition of nuclear weapons".

The report also observed that "it is unlikely that others can be induced to abstain indefinitely from acquiring nuclear weapons if the Soviet Union and the United States continue in a nuclear arms race". Recommendations included lessened US and Soviet emphasis on nuclear weapons; a freeze on strategic vehicles and a 30% cut in US and Soviet strategic forces, at a time when each side possessed single-warhead missiles only in the low hundreds; a comprehensive test ban; Latin American and African nuclear-free zones; a cutoff of nuclear materials production; and revision of NATO strategy to give greater relative emphasis to nonnuclear weapons.

Despite proposals from Mexico and others, Article VI of the NPT did not identify specific measures for disarmament. However, President Johnson announced upon signing the treaty in July 1968 that agreement had been reached with the Soviet Union for negotiations on the limitation and reduction of long-range delivery vehicles and defenses against long-range missiles, negotiations that would eventually result in SALT I and the ABM Treaty. Thus the NPT and the ABM Treaty are linked in their origins. Agreement on a wider Article VI agenda was indicated later in the summer of 1968. The Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva, the predecessor to today's Conference on Disarmament, agreed to a list of measures that could be discussed under a heading taken directly from NPT Article VI, "effective measures relating to the cessation of nuclear

arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament". The measures included "the cessation of testing, the non-use of nuclear weapons, the cessation of production of fissionable materials for weapons use, the cessation of manufacture of weapons, reduction and subsequent elimination of nuclear stockpiles, nuclear free zones, etc." Three decades later, key measures identified in the Gilpatric Committee report and at the 1968 Geneva Conference have yet to be achieved, including a test ban, a fissile materials cutoff, agreements prohibiting or restricting use of nuclear weapons, and revision of NATO strategy.

While there have been reductions in nuclear arsenals from peaks reached subsequent to the NPT's entry into force, they are not close, and deliberately so, to requiring qualitative changes in longstanding policies regarding possible use of nuclear weapons. The 2000 Annual Report of the US Secretary of Defense describes a nuclear posture to be retained for the "foreseeable future" that serves to "deter[] aggression" and "deal with threats or uses of NBC [nuclear, biological, chemical] weapons", with nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO [that] permit widespread European participation in all aspects of the Alliance's nuclear role. The report also states "and this point cannot be overemphasized - that "these goals can be achieved at lower force levels" contemplated in the START process. And twice in the past six years Russia has rewritten its strategic doctrine to widen the circumstances under which it might use nuclear weapons.

Not coincidentally, also more than three decades after the NPT was negotiated, India has begun to openly adopt a stance of nuclear deterrence. Yet this prospect, and the likewise anticipated reaction of Pakistan, was one of the factors prompting negotiation of the NPT in the first place.

This significant failure should prompt the realization that it is well past time to fulfill the agenda that was clear at the inception of the NPT, and indeed to move on to identify and execute a new agenda that will achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Last week we all heard the Foreign Ministers of the United States and the Russian Federation tout actual and prospective cuts in their two nuclear arsenals under START I, II, and III. Putting aside the fact that it took seven years to reach this point, there are numerous reasons not to acquiesce to this agenda. Implementation of START II is dependent upon highly uncertain US Senate approval of 1997 agreements clarifying what tests can be conducted under the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and completion of START III will depend upon equally uncertain resolution of disputes over US ballistic missile defense plans. If START II and START III as currently envisaged are implemented, Russia and the United States a decade from now likely each will retain on the order of 2000 deployed strategic warheads plus thousands of additional tactical, spare, and reserve warheads. Such forces among other things will "give each side the certain ability to carry out an annihilating counterattack", according to a recently released US ABM proposal.

Rapid and deep cuts are possible. START negotiations must not play the perverse role of strangling disarmament. Former US government officials from both parties have called for Continuous Arms Reductions Talks. By agreeing to START III levels before START II was in force, the US and Russia implicitly acknowledged that one treaty need not be

fulfilled before progress is made on the next. Continuous Arms Reductions Talks would be the logical extension of this trend. The US and Russia must reduce and eliminate tactical forces as well as strategic forces. It is important that US nuclear forces deployed in Europe be withdrawn and dismantled. Thus would be ended the controversy over nuclear sharing which is eroding the foundations of the NPT. There are now about 180 US nuclear bombs deployed under nuclear cooperation agreements in six non-nuclear weapon states: NATO countries, the Netherlands, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Germany, and Belgium.

Other developments undermining disarmament and non-proliferation are well known. The US Senate rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and did so in a mockery of a debate which turned on whether, as the Clinton Administration claimed, the CTBT would contribute to the maintenance of a US nuclear advantage over the long term. The US plan for deploying a national missile defense that requires modification or abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is anti-disarmament. This gratuitous roadblock to arms control will be examined in a later presentation.

A DISARMAMENT AGENDA

The Review Conference must establish a strong disarmament agenda for next five years.

To begin with, there must be a commitment to refrain from actions undermining fulfillment of Article VI, including resuming nuclear tests, developing and deploying new or modified weapons, producing fissile materials for weapons, and modifying or abrogating the ABM Treaty.

There must also be a clear affirmation of the commitment to full implementation of Article VI, and, in this context, acceptance as authoritative the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning Article VI, adopted unanimously, which states that "[t]here exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

This affirmation will be meaningful only if demonstrated by further commitments and actions, including:

1. The nuclear weapon states' unequivocal commitment to engage without delay in an accelerated process of nuclear disarmament including through commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to complete nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.
2. Immediate action by the Russian Federation and the United States of America to implement the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) II and to conclude and implement START III at an early date. During these negotiations, the two powers should progressively dealert and reduce their arsenals in reciprocal steps independent of an existing treaty, as they did in 1991. Such cuts could later be codified in START or a

Continuous Arms Reductions Talks.

3. The early involvement of other nuclear-armed states in a process addressing dealerting, transparency, reductions, and elimination.
4. Reduction and elimination of infrastructure and capabilities for nuclear weapons research and development, to accompany or precede reduction and elimination of warheads and delivery systems.
5. Adoption of policies that diminish the role of nuclear weapons in order to create a stable atmosphere for disarmament and contribute to international confidence and security. In this context all states possessing nuclear weapons, whether or not they are parties to the NPT, should take early steps to:
 - withdraw nuclear weapons deployed in other states
 - eliminate all tactical nuclear weapons from their arsenals
 - proceed to the de-alerting and removal of all nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles
 - adopt doctrines and postures that preclude the use of nuclear weapons
 - formally recognize that existing security assurances are legally binding, apply in all circumstances, and permit no exceptions other than those already expressly stated
 - respect the letter and spirit of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by recognizing that it is an instrument of nuclear disarmament as well as non-proliferation in all its aspects, and by ceasing the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the production of new types of nuclear weapons
 - refrain from producing any weapons-usable fissile materials for military-purposes pending the conclusion of a ban on their production, put all fissile materials declared to be in excess of military requirements under appropriate International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, and refrain from producing tritium for military purposes.
6. Development and negotiation of a global regime to control and eliminate or convert missiles.
7. Creation of additional nuclear weapon free zones, and strengthening of existing zones, including through ratification and strict observance of their protocols, linkage among the zones, and extension to cover sea and air transit of nuclear weapons.
8. Preparation for a universal disarmament regime including through NPT-based consultations with states possessing nuclear weapons now outside the NPT.

Glenn T. Seaborg, with Benjamin S. Loeb, *Stemming the Tide: Arms Control in the Johnson Years*, p. 141. Seaborg reports regarding a June 16, 1994 meeting regarding non-proliferation: "Rusk then said he wasn't sure we might not want to give India and Japan nuclear weapons after China attained them". *Id.* at p. 132.

Seaborg states that at a White House meeting on March 27, 1968, William Foster, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, mentioned steps to implement Article VI including a comprehensive test ban, a cutoff of nuclear materials production, strategic arms limitations, and forbidding nuclear explosives on the seabed. *Id.* at 374.

"Proposal on ABM: 'Ready to Work With Russia', *The New York Times*, April 28, 2000, p. A10.

ANF (ALL NUCLEAR FILES)/Case for Pessimism
Thursday, February 03, 2005 [edited 12-17-08]
Old: XNUC: Why nuclear war likely

Why nuclear war is highly likely in the mid- to long-range future; and why efforts to avoid it are not only very difficult but are likely to fail.

Given our present military technology, posture and doctrines (especially in the US and Russia, but also in all the present and likely nuclear weapons states) the basis for pessimism--about a high probability of eventual large-scale nuclear weapons use and the difficulty and unlikelihood of successful efforts to avert this-- rests on aspects of "human nature," especially as organized in hierarchical organizations and nation-states. little-recognized and problematic.

These include aspects often seen as problematic, including drive for power, greed, focus on short-run advantage, and instincts toward revenge (often disguised as "justice"). But they also include phenomena of conscience, morality, religion, loyalties, "discretion" (secrecy), obedience and personal self-sacrifice that are generally very highly regarded, rewarded and admired. In existing circumstances, it is in part these aspects of our "better nature," our "highest selves"—manifested in unquestioning obedience to authority-- that lead us toward doom, and make it close to impossible to change course.

Our own country leads the way, and (with Britain) has done so for over sixty years. That has been true since about 1942 (with Germany's blitz of London essentially over, succeeded by British and later US area bombing of cities, and the start of the Manhattan Project).

Global change is needed, and the full participation--and probably leadership, unlikely as that is-- of the US is essential to this change. But the US has always been and under the Bush administration remains the single greatest opponent of the necessary changes in attitudes directly relating to nuclear war. (Prior to Gorbachev, the Soviet Union, especially during the Brezhnev period, was a sturdy partner in this opposition.)